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Identity Construction and Conflict Management In A Multicultural
Setting: The Case of the Oromo Diaspora in Norway

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ABSTRACT

Identity construction requires the involvement of certain ideas which are right or wrong, desirable or undesirable relying on existing natural metaphors. Therefore, it is difficult to find constant identity in human life due to certain effects of environmental changes and the fluid nature of identity itself.

Identity constructions can comprise indigenous traditional practices of a certain society. The indigenous practices include a conflict management system of a community. Conflict is a natural phenomenon that might happen, due to certain incompatibility among individuals, groups or parties. Thus, to contain a conflict and to ensure peace and harmony within a society, every community follows its conflict arbitrating systems which is based on norms, customs and values.

The study examines the roles that the Oromos are taking to construct their identities. It explores the procedures taken to bring reconciliation among the Oromos in exile, particularly in Norway in line with their current identities in the new multicultural framework. It also scrutinizes the status of the indigenous conflict management (*Jaarsummaa)* system in exile.

The study has used a qualitative research method by taking a single case study on the Oromo diaspora in Norway. Semi-structured interviews have been carried out with selected individuals who live in the city of Oslo.

The results of the study portray the fluid nature of identities among the Oromos of the study area. They have constructed their identities in various ways. Indeed, there are also some ways of identity purging as well. The result of the indigenous Oromo conflict management also indicates the situation of the system in exile.

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KEYWORDS: Oromo, Diaspora, Exile**,** Identity, Conflict Management, Multiculturalism, Tradition

CHAPTER ONE

1. **INTRODUCTION**

1.1 Background of the study

Human beings frequently move from place to place, country to country, continent to continent and disperse all over the world for different purposes. This human dispersion is known as diaspora. Diaspora refers to all migrants living far away from their ancestral places in the different environments within new cultures that are different from their original cultural backgrounds. For instance, for the African Union the African diaspora "comprises people of African origin living outside the continent, irrespective of their citizenships and nationality" (African Union 2005:7).[1] The World Bank goes further to distinguish between involuntary and voluntary diaspora, and a historical and contemporary component of the diaspora.[2]

The diasporic situations occur due to various reasons. In this century, the cases are different from the earlier times. Some transfers may occur by the government action, while the other migrations could happen to avoid conflicts and warfare and to seek a better safe environment. For example, the Oromo diaspra is of the modern type. Oromos are one of the largest single indigenous ethnonation in the Eastern part of Africa that mainly live in Ethiopia and other parts of East Africa in Kenya and in Somalia.

Today, all corners of the world are home for them. Indeed, all migrations among Oromos are not willingly happen. As some existing literature (e.g. Jalata 2011) has shown, the government role is one of the pressuring factors in connection to the Oromo political cases in Ethiopia. The Oromos have been the most oppressed people in Ethiopia, a country that has an imperial history; by all Ethiopian leaders since the empire was formed through war. The oppression continues even in today's world in new forms. Thus, to escape the oppressions, they are dispersing all over the world from time to time, and they are becoming more multicultural societies as well.

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[1] Quoted by Plaza and Ratha, (Editors), Diaspora for Development: world Bank Publication 2011,PP 55

[2] ibid.

In the multicultural setting, it is not so easy to practice indigenous cultures or traditions, especially in exile. Migrants are sandwiched in between the cultures- those of the other diaspora cultures and the host country's culture. For that matter, a few of them struggle to retain their inherited culture as much as possible to make where they live a familiar environment that is similar to their former homeland by forming their own communities in their host countries (Esman, 2009: 5) where they reconstruct their identities. Indeed, it is hard to practice their cultures as in its original way.

On the other hand, for a few, even their origin has become a story since their departure is involuntary. They have only heard from their families, especially those of the diaspora who are born in exile. They may have never visited the homeland they claim. But, their heart is usually in between their ancestral home and where they live. Some of them who left their home have also attachments with their communities at where they communicate with their neighborhood and relatives in their native languages (Esman, 2009:5). More specifically, the attachment is to their local village or province that they left behind and where their families, relatives, and burial sites of ancestors remain (ibid).

Human life is full of interactions: with the environment, with the community and with oneself where the types of interactions continue with certain changes. As the Greek philosopher Heraclitus (535 BC-475 BC) observed, "There is nothing permanent except change"; which indicates a continuity of change. Therefore, as long as there is a continuity of moves, there could also be a continuity of changes, could be of an identity. The interactions could also lead the human being to involve either into a harmony or into violence as a matter of the variety of competing interests among individuals. Of course, the differences of the interests can be the fundamental causes for conflicts that exist at some point.

Conflict is not limited to certain individuals, groups or areas; it is pervasive and ubiquitous like a human nature. It is a social phenomenon that has a high probability of happening at any time in which people live, work and participates together on common social matters. There is an Oromo saying "*Nama miti dhagaanuu walitti bu'a.*" Roughly translated, it is not only human beings, but also stones, a nonliving substance may

collide. This peculiar Oromo saying shows the nature of conflict as a part of human existence.

When there is a conflict, there is a controlling mechanism and strategies within any society. The controlling system could be either through the state court system by judiciary or by traditional ways. For instance, in the Oromo community, *Jaarsummaa*[3] is one of the prominent traditional Oromo social systems for conflict management. The system has existed within the Oromo communities for centuries to preserve its structure and as a procedure of conflict management. It is constituted of *Jaarsa biyyaa* (elderly people or the council of elders).

The Oromos give great value to tradition. They prefer to address every single case accordingly by following the traditional procedures of earlier times. Tradition is made up of the long inherited characteristics of the Oromo societies that have different structures from the contemporary ways of living. Thus, whenever conflicts happen, the Oromo community most likely gives great priority to the local elders to settle the cases according to traditions before going to the police or to the modern court system. This is a common phenomenon among all Oromo tribes in the Oromo country to build peace and harmony within the societies.

Indeed, the traditional practices are how the Oromos deal within their daily life. It is the foundation of their identity. In the Oromo traditional society, every single action implement follows the deep-rooted traditional practices of the community. Tradition or cultural movement is the fundamental means by which it expresses their identity or Oromoness. For example, Jalata, similarly states the Oromo cultural movement in the following ways:

> "The Oromo cultural movement has been initiated based on the Oromo cultural foundation. This movement embodies the concepts that express Oromo Nationalism such as *Oromummaa* (Oromoness), *gootummaa* (Bravery or patriotism), *bilissummaa* (Libration), *Gadaa haraa* (renewed Oromo

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[3]Jaarsummaa: Traditional cultural conflict resolution where elders/ community members are selected for this purpose based on their analytical capacity and on how they see points raised from different angles.

democracy), *Moottummaa* (state), *Nagaa Oromoo* (peace for all Oromo) and *finna* (development)" (Jalata 1998: 39).

In general, Oromos enjoy traditional practices in almost every social activity from the social gathering of the coffee ceremony to major social issues like conflict management. Before the introduction of modern management systems, or more specifically the Western styles of management through bureaucracy, the Oromos had been managing their communities through the traditional social system - *Gada*[4]. Under the umbrella of the *Gada* system, they resolve conflicts in indigenous ways by implementing the necessary conditions that the customs and norms of the community allow in different parts of the Oromo country.

The *Gada* system is one of the highly developed and self-sufficient social systems that served as the basis of democratic and egalitarian political systems. This indigenous egalitarian social system advocates individual economic and political rights that everyone has irrespective of gender differences. The system is a uniquely egalitarian one in which the women also have a role to play (Legesse, 1973). In the *Gada* system, the members take on new responsibilities every eight years. The age of the members determines the seniority in the community (ibid). But, after the Abyssinian invasion that aided by their use of modern weaponry they acquired from the Europeans, this egalitarian system of societal law has declined in connection to their loss of freedom since late 1880s. The Abyssinians almost completely dismantled the Oromo system.

1.2   Statement of the problems

These days, questions of identities and multiculturalism are of great interest in social science studies on diaspora due to the diversified ways of living and multinational ties in most countries. Diaspora of any group lives far from their home, relatives and their original culture - the innate part of them. Therefore, from the moment they first arrive

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[4]Gada system is the traditional Oromo democratic and egalitarian administrative system by which the power is transferred at every eight years to the successors. The Gada system is interestingly discussed by a prominent anthropologist Asmarom Legesse in his book entitled "Gada: three approaches to the study of African society" Legesse, 1973.

they work on how to integrate with the other communities in their daily activities to make their life easier in the multicultural settings. On top of this, there would also be an identity reshuffle among most of the diaspora groups either conditionally or unconditionally.

In the multicultural environment, communities often build new identities or hold multiple identities. On this regard, a number of case studies have been conducted on various diaspora groups (e.g on Somali diaspora, Jewish diaspora) and on multiculturalism as well. But, the case of the Oromo diaspora philosophy on multiculturalism and identity has not been discussed yet. On top of this, how such premises hold true and work for the Oromos in exile has not been studied so far.

An environment of multiculturalism always brings together a variety of potentially conflicting cultural expressions on daily basis. Thus, respecting one another and building tolerance can equally benefit all such societies as well as every member of the community. Multicultural environment has good opportunity for social integrations within different community members' and within the same community members as well. Of course, it may not be easy to establish total peaceful integration and harmony without conflict. Conflicts could exist even through integrations hence it is very challenging to create compatibility within human life in all matters.

On the other hand, it was a traditional phenomenon among almost all African ethnicities to solve conflicts through traditional ways. There are some differences in the processes and conflict handling procedures, but, all have used traditional conflict management systems which define their identities. Oromos are one of them. Even in today's world, they are still handling conflicts through the traditional ways of '*jaarssumma*' in most traditional communities of the Oromo country.

There are unique procedural strategies that the Oromos take to manage conflicts through '*Jaarsumma*'. The procedural strategies are meaningful and take into account every single detail of the cases. Various scholars agree that the Oromo people have traditional mechanisms to arbitrate clashes. In this regard, some scholars have written on how the Oromo people manage conflicts in traditional ways. Lewis (1984b: 92) and Kuntsson (1967), as quoted by Chala (2002), explain that the majority of Oromo people settle

conflicts through traditional procedures. Of course, this is unquestionable; it is a fact that people settle most clashes through traditional ways in the Oromo country. However, in the case of the Oromo diaspora communities, how they manage conflicts away from the homeland has received little study. Even foreign scholars who have published research on Oromo culture have not explored the question. The Oromo scholars who have discussed Oromo conflict management have neither focused on diaspora conflict management as well. Rather, they have been focused on the cases of certain specific Oromo groups living in the Oromo country on how they traditionally manage conflicts within their communities.

So far, no single study has found on how the Oromos in the diaspora resolve conflicts. The available studies found on the Oromo indigenous conflict management have proved rare and inaccessible. There is only Chala's work on *Waliso*[5] Oromos (2002) and Jembere's work on legal issues (1998) which touches on some roles of Oromo conflict arbitrating systems in the Oromo country. Above all, insufficient emphasis has been given to this special indigenous conflict management (*jaarsummaa*) strategy, and little consideration have been given to the Oromo diaspora conflict arbitrating mechanisms as well.

Therefore, this study attempts to scrutinize the Oromo identity in diaspora, how they maintain their identities or develop new identities, and the Oromo diaspora conflict management strategies in the multicultural setting taking the cases of the Oromo diaspora in Norway.

Additionally the study also distinguishes the case of the role Oromo women in conflict management in diaspora. So far most scholars (e.g Colleir 1975: 138; Tuso, 2000) have argued that the Oromo women have been marginalized in decision making, and they are inactive in conflict management in the Oromo system in the Oromo country due to male dominance in the system. However, Chala (2002) argues the case differently finding the *Woliso* Oromo women's political role as equivalent to the men's. He describes the women's role in the following way: "Despite the fact women seem to play marginal role

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[5] Waliso is one of the Oromo tribe that is the Mecha faction of the Mecha-Tulama Oromo in Ethiopia. It is also the name of a city that is found in south-Western part of Showa by the New Administration and found to the southwest of Addis in about 115 kms.

in political activities; politics is not entirely the business of men among Waliso" (Chala, 2002: 44). Thus, this study would also give great emphasis to the role of Oromo women conflict management and decision making procedures in exile within the Oromo community in Norway.

1.3   Objective of the study

The study has both general and specific objectives.

1.3.1   General Objectives

The main objectives of this study are:

- To scrutinize whether the Oromos have maintained their identity in the western societies or developed new identities.
- To identify how conflict is managed traditionally among the Oromo diaspora and to assess the moral and socio cultural values in diaspora life.
- To explore the ritual practices and traditional religious role taken among the Oromo diaspora to manage conflicts in a different environment, if any.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

- To see the identity construction in the multicultural framework among the Oromos in the diaspora.
- To see the values that the Oromo diaspora earn from the multicultural environment.
- To identify the strategies used in managing conflict among the Oromo diaspora
- To see procedures taken in conflict mediation and steps taken to bring reconciliation
- To see who specifically manages conflict and what specific ritual practices are used, if any.
- To explore the role of women in conflict management among Oromo diaspora in particular

- To see how effective the Oromo conflict management system is in the diaspora and whether it is a guarantee for both parties of the conflict to bring long-lasting reconciliation.

1.4 Significance of the study

The Oromos have been denied the right to exercise their cultural values and to use their language for so long since the formation of Ethiopia as a state. They have been even bullied whenever they use their language in public. The situation has created millions of the Oromo nationalists. Indeed, their effort has had a small effect, and today *Afaan Oromo* has become a language of education in the lower grades and in a few institutions of higher education as a major and minor courses, and become a working language and language of the media in the Oromia regional state, though still it is hard to fully exercise Oromo art and literature freely which is the highest goal of the Oromo people. This little improvement has come through the bloodshed and efforts of Oromo nationalists. Many brave Oromos died in the struggle to maintain the Oromo culture, language and the Oromo identity. Many of them have also been forced to leave the country and become refugees in different parts of the world. Today, many of them are becoming a voice for the voiceless Oromo people in exile.

Identity has many discourses. Therefore, it could have been understood in various ways according to the way an individual may label himself/herself. Apart from this, as far as there are certain changes on human life due to certain human effects, there could also be a probability of an identity changes as well. Therefore, human beings always struggle to construct and reconstruct their identities. Indeed, through efforts that one makes to maintain or to build new identities, there are several social interactions between the human being and the nearby communities and with the environment. The social interactions of a man may end up by forming a new form of social phenomenon that could create a harmony or a conflict. Harmony builds human social ties while a conflict could create either destructiveness or constructiveness. Constructive conflict would bring a new energy for rebuilding social matters while destructive goes in an opposite direction. Of course, human beings always have certain strategies by nature to manage

conflicts either through traditional or by modern judicial processes. Thereby conflict management strategies become a serious issue in this world, and even becomes a field of study in various universities as a discipline focusing on peace building, conflict management and conflict transformation research works.

The intention of this work is to contribute additional information on earlier works done in the area and on the Oromo diaspora in particular. On top of this, to provide information that would be useful to forthcoming researchers on the Oromo identity construction and conflict management in exile.

In general, the work would provide a fresh memory on the Oromo identity and Oromo conflict management systems for the Oromos in exile, and gives clues to other readers about the Oromo identities and the Oromo conflict management systems. It also explores the diverse Oromo diaspora identities in the multicultural setting and gives a timely signal for greater awareness about Oromo identities for Oromos. Above all, the study is meant to be more important for understanding the identity of the Oromo diaspora, how they express their identity in a different context in the highly multicultural settings, and how they solve their conflicts in exile.

1.5   Organization of the thesis

The first part is an introduction that contains backgrounds of the study, statements of the problem, objectives of the study, significance of the study and organization of the research work. It is followed by a second chapter that consists of a literature review. Chapter three discusses the theoretical part of the historical and socio-political backgrounds of the Oromo people and the concepts of *jaarsummaa*. Chapter four explores the research methodology of the study. Chapter five discusses the findings and results of the Oromo diaspora and the Oromo identity in the Multicultural setting, and the Oromo indigenous conflict management strategies in the diaspora. The concluding chapter is the discussion of the overall results on identity construction and conflict management.

CHAPTER TWO

2.   LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1   Conflict

2.1.1   Definition of Conflict

Traditionally, conflict has been defined as simply an opposing matter of certain interests due to the scarcity of resources and the frustration that results. "It is often thought to occur in mixed-motive relationships where persons have both competitive and cooperative interests"(Leung and Tjosvold 1998: 5).

By another definition, Boulding (1962: 4) defines conflict as: "a situation of competition in which the parties are aware of the incompatibility with the wishes of the others". The Webster New International Dictionary also defines conflict as mutual interference of opposing or incompatible forces or qualities; or the interference of an idea, desire, event, or activity with another.

Indeed, it is very natural to have different interests among people. What pleases one person does not always please the other/others. Happiness is in a way that in every individual's perception. Therefore, even if it is not always, occasionally being unhappy could lead a person to have a conflict with the other/others as a matter of searching for self-desires. Of course, it does not totally mean that people's idea or interests will never be compatible at all; and is always end in an unhappy ways. Indeed, people can come up with certain arrangements based on their desire to understand one another by building a sense of tolerance in their minds. Similarly, Leung and Tjosvold have expressed in the following ways:

> "[…..]what is crucial defining conflict as incompatible activities is that it does not equate actions with goals[….] Just because people's actions are incompatible does not mean that their desired end-states are. Their goal and aspiration can still be compatible. They can still get where they want to go"(Leung and Tjosvold 1998: 6)

Some experts define conflict positively claiming that conflict is not necessarily bad. However, some have also put contrary arguments about it. For instance, Durkheim as

cited in Sipova (1989) and Chala (2002) considers conflict as an unnecessary and anomalous spectacle. Similarly, Kriesberg   (2007: 4) states conflict as some considers as something only negative and to be completely avoided due to the fear they have that it may threaten their existing status quo, which they like to maintain. The self-ego on a certain position that tries to keep the personal interest at the expenses of the others leads some individuals to give the negative concepts to conflict, although there is also another possible way to consider conflict as a constructive outcome which could give courage in certain tasks for better accomplishments. On the other hand, various authors (e.g Schellenberg, 1996, Sandole, et.al 1993) indicate that conflict is neither bad nor good in itself. Rather it is the reaction and an attitude of certain individual's that makes conflict either constructive or destructive. Of course, the parameter of conflict whether it is functional or dysfunctional (bad or good) depends on how the conflict management procedures or techniques are implemented on conflict arbitrating systems. The manner in which conflict is handled determines its constructiveness and destructiveness (Deutsch and Coleman 2000).

Scholars who define conflicts positively argue its necessity by comparing with one of the basic human needs:-sex. According to Sandole, et.al (1993: 6), "Conflict, like sex, is an essential creative element in human relationships." It is the means through which changes in our social values and welfare, security, justice and opportunity of personal developments can be achieved. "[….] the existence of the flow of conflict is the only guarantee that the aspirations of society will be attained. Indeed, conflict, like sex is to be enjoyed" (ibid). The above concept strongly supports the existence of conflicts for better change through enjoyment.

Indeed, conflict has big potential to create much more positive social changes or negative social beings (Kerisberg: 2007). Therefore, it is necessary to understand the basic processes of conflict arbitrating systems to create mutual understandings and to minimize the destructiveness rate; if possible, to change into more constructive to maximize the productive outcomes.

In summary, the definitions above express conflicts in relation to the existence of differences among people. Indeed, difference in between human being is one of a social

and natural phenomenon that ranks among all age in human life, which leads to disagreement that results conflict. As all definitions indicates, the central point of all centers on the incongruity due to diverse personal needs or the emerging of different ideas among individuals.

2.1.2   Types of Conflict

Conflict in between the nation and the state are not the main focuses of this study. Rather, the study focuses on more of the interpersonal conflicts within the community. Indeed, researchers have not yet identified a single source of conflict. However, there are different suggestions and assumptions by various scholars based on their disciplines. According to expertise in Literature and Psychology conflicts are categorized into four major groups. These are: conflicts of man vs. man, man vs. self, man vs. nature and man vs. society. For instance, in literature, conflict is very essential to creating plots which gives life to the entire story.

Some writers classify the type of conflicts into many branches. For example, Rod Windle and Suzanne Warren (1999) in their article, classify conflicts into seven major categories. These are: Data Conflict, Relationship Conflict, Value Conflict, Resource Conflict, History Conflict, Structural Conflict and Psychological Conflict.   Data Conflict exists primarily over the facts through finding information. It focuses on data disagreement with the other party. The relationship conflict is a conflict arising due to increasing doubt over the seriousness of the opposing party. Conflict over values explains the dispute that leads to an inability to build tolerances and accept the views of others. Conflict over resources refers to the availability of resources and costs while some desires certain goals on the limited different resources by cost. Conflicts due to history refer to the concerns of the past in which historical injuries are kept by individuals through blame and guilt of the other party. Structural conflict deals with the structural reality existing from the outsider forces through various means like bullying. Thus the structural solution is a good means for such conflict. The last type of conflict is psychological conflict. This type of conflict refers to the psychological needs of human beings love, autonomy and desire for power, recognition and control.

2.1.3   Some Aspects of Conflict

In general the concept of conflict is context-specific; it is multi causal and multi-dimensional resulting from the combination of various factors (Haider, 2011:   6). Socio-economic situation and inequitable utilization and distribution of the resources are the most influential factors that push conflicts to exist. Of course, some of these are the practical cases that are clearly observed in most parts of the world. For instance, the existing research (Edosa, et. al, 2005) has shown, the causes of conflicts among the Oromos themselves mostly depict socio economic factors on resources. Additionally, the socio-psychological elements in human life at various stages can also cause conflicts due to collective needs and fears in dissimilar fashion. Apart from these, an absence of mutual understanding among persons could also create high possibility for conflicts to ensue; especially when the other party starts to process in ways to confirm the negative image of the other side by ignoring the existing evidence (Kalman, in Sandole, et. al. 2009: 171-183).

On top of these, the available research also indicates systematic threats to self-esteem as one of the potential sources of conflicts. A research conducted in the Arab world confirms, humiliation, in particular, public humiliation and feelings of betrayal have strong resonance. These are connected to the loss of dignity and shame which have strong potential to cause painful emotions and lead to taking revenge in public (Haider, 2011: 23). These discourses have seemingly related concepts with the Oromo nation as well. In the Oromo culture, it is shameful to disgrace someone in public even if a person has made mistakes. It is advisable to give him/her a lesson in a private. If not, the outcome may end in loss of face. The ashamed person could take revenge which could probably lead to great destructiveness of social conflict. According to Kreisberg (2007: 7) "Social conflicts vary in six relevant ways: the issues in contention, the characteristics of contending parties, the relation between the adversaries, the context in which the adversaries contend, the means used to conduct the struggle, and the trajectory of the struggle."[6]

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[6] For more detail analysis see Kreisberg, 2007

Furthermore, individual characteristics are also the sources for a conflict where the individual's nature leads to social conflict rather than the existing context of the act (Schellenberg 1996: 12-13). This view indicates that human nature would be one source for conflicts to emerge. In the social processes where there is a social interaction among individuals or within groups, certain matters could bring conflict if there would be a misunderstanding that allows a window for incompatibility. In fact it is impossible to make the needs of all individuals or groups the same. Therefore, the dissimilarity in interest on certain social matters could become a major factor for conflict to exist.

2.2   Conflict Management

Conflict management is a way to contain long term problems by taking alternative solutions. But it is not a resolution (Deutsch 1973), it is a means taken to contain the variances when a resolution is completely impossible. It is a way that arbitrates conflicts by searching for quick solutions for the existed problems. Usually it does not deal with the root causes of the conflict as conflict resolution does; rather, it focuses on the symptoms and finds solution for it.   According to Maill (2004: 3), "conflict management is the art of designing appropriate institution to guide the inevitable conflict in to appropriate channel". The goal is to make the conflict beneficial and less destructive for all sides (Deutsch, 1973). Bloom field and Railly have said the following about the conflict management:

> *"[….]* Conflict management is the positive and constructive handling of differences and divergences. Rather than advocating methods for removing conflicts….addresses the more realistic questions of conflict management: how to deal with it in constructive way, how to bring in opposing sides together in a cooperative process, how to design a practical, achievable cooperative system for the constructive management of difference" (Bloomfield and Reilly 1998: 18).

Conflict management has its own procedures and strategies. Existing research (Rahim 1983: 368-376) shows that there are five conflict management strategies namely: integrating, obliging, dominating, avoiding and compromising. Integrating is an approach that gives high concern for self and for the others (Rahim, 1983). It deals

effectively with conflict in a mutual way (Gross & Guerrero 2000). Obliging is an approach where a person uses low concern for self but high concerns for the others. The person may easily give up his interest just for the sake of others to fulfill the other's need. Avoiding is the opposite of the integrating approach in conflict management strategies where a person neither gives concern for self nor for the others. A person using this approach hardly understands the other's problem due the low concern he/she has for others. Dominating is a style where a person gives great priority for self-interest rather than considering others. It is a way of forcing one's self-interest on others to dominate the others interest. Compromising is a sort of forfeiting something to get some other benefits from both sides to come to some balanced way of achieving that could satisfy both parties. A person has to give up some of his self-concerns in order to gain some other things from the other side. This takes place when there is equal consideration for one's self and for other.

2.3   Negotiation Processes in Conflicts

2.3.1   What Is Negotiation?

Negotiation is a means of communication that helps to bring a solution. It is the process of interacting with the goal of obtaining agreement to reach on a certain consensus which is desired by both parties (Corvette 2007: 1-2). In an interaction there is an influence from the individual's behavior and emotions over the others and vice versa. The interactions among people create certain images in the mind and people perceive someone as his/her mind's understood. "We participate in a continuum of perceiving others and forming attitudes toward people, things, and concepts while others are perceiving and forming attitudes about us" (Corvette 2007: 2). The perceptions we have about someone could be negative or positive. If it is negative, it could be a source for emerging of tension among individuals. Therefore, negotiation among individuals or communities would have to be based on the values, norms and custom of the communities to release the tensions and to bring a harmony in the societies. Indeed, "sources of tensions in the community negotiations are identity needs, such as respect,

reputation, self-image, and beliefs that the opinions of community members value utmost" (Spangle, M.L et.al 2003: 327).

Negotiation is not just a simple task. It requires some principles, arts and scientific procedures to decelerate the escalated temper of human beings. It is also a complex and interdisciplinary procedures that encompasses conflict assessment, management and resolution. It is an involvement that works on being able to discuss and reach a mutually satisfactory agreement. When the two parties enter into negotiation, there is interdependence where both parties expect to give and take (Maiese, 2003)[7]. This interdependence opens a means for possible ways of negotiation. The interdependence could be negative or positive (Deutsch 2000: 22).

Negotiation is a special type of communication where the parties in conflict look for problem solving mechanisms through fruitful discussions, develop common understanding that could equally benefit both parties as a basis for agreement and is also a means to facilitate harmony through conversation and consensus that creates mutual understandings(Spangle, et.al 2003: 3). In the community negotiation process, the negotiators need to have a well-planned discussion process that improves the likelihood of successful negotiations agreeing on a set of procedures and thereby reducing unfocused discussion that could hamper the negotiation process (ibid).

Some existing literature (e.g. Burgess, et. al, 1997; Lewick, et.al 1999; Spangle, M.L et.al 2003; Ramsbotham, et.al, 2009) states the possible negotiation results namely: win/win, win/lose lose/win, and lose/lose; that each having a different impact on the relationship exists among the concerned parties. The Win/Win approach is a collaborative approach that is very ideal for both parties. It has a positive impact that sustains a long-term relationship among the concerned parties. Win/Lose is a competitive approach that is acceptable in the short-term among the winners; but it could jeopardize relationships with the losing party in future negotiations as the losers may look for revenge in the long run. The Lose/Win approach is an accommodating approach that might be used as a short-term tactic just to gain power in the future

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[7] *Beyondintractability.org* Web site, http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/dialogue/ accessed April 2012

through negotiations. It may indicate that the losing party has some weak side which is uncommitted tor the desired goal. The Lose/Lose approach is always unsatisfactory and leads to both parties to walk away from the deal. It does not open a window for negotiation as it provides no means that brings both parties to consensus. This approach is called the avoidance approach.

2.3.2 Conflict Negotiation Processes

With the level of its effect, conflict could strengthen or weaken the society. There is a Brazilian saying on constructive conflict "Toda unanimidade é burra", in a roughly translation to English "It's bunk if we all agree!" The saying emphasizes the nature of conflict and its naturalistic existence as there is never full agreement among people in all matters. Apparently, it also shows the importance of appearing different ideas among people that might create constructive conflicts as well. In fact, if there is a conflict in any community, there is always a mechanism to control as well. "[…] society is impossible without conflict; and society is also worse than impossible without control of conflict" (Bohannan 1967: xi).

Conflict is a natural challenge in daily life. Thus, resolving through analyzing the process matters a lot for peace building and reconciliation. Above all, for better reconciliations, a negotiation process matters more. For instance, as an article on conflict from World Bank (2006) indicates, there are two important aspects of negotiation processes that have to be considered by conflict analysts. These are, first, the process by which the analysis is planned, organized and applied. Second, the content of the analysis, including its thematic focus and scope guided by the specific conceptual frame work and tools applied (the World Bank, 2006: 1). While analyzing conflict, systematically mapping the causes through identifying challenges and implementing earlier experience on conflict mediation is very crucial to provide specific guidance during the conflict resolution process as well (ibid). Of course, conflict analysis is not conflict resolution. However, the analysis process contributes a lot and it is a device for conflict resolution.

As far as there is no single cause for conflict to build on, there is no single identified process for conflict management in the negotiations process as well. The degree at

which the two parties perceive the conflict and the effects that the conflicts bring matters more. In the traditional conflict management, previous personal or professional experiences related to conflict plays a ground rule for resolving conflicts. Negotiators need to consider what may not prevent them from reach into an agreement before they begin negotiation. Indeed, experiences in the areas have good impact on taking the processes forward in a possible way. Therefore, the mediation process will unfold by identifying the people who are involved in the conflict. Then, follows by identifying the sources, by identifying how and why the conflict started and ended, the outcome, and by identifying whether any clue left behind that may drive the continuity of the conflict. In addition to this, " by diagnosing the structural, strategic, psychological and cultural processes, good negotiators are able to craft strategies to overcome them by reframing the issues, building productive working relationships by setting up confidence building mechanism, and achieving greater cultural understanding" (Watkins 1999: 253).

2.4   The Diaspora, Multiculturalism and Identity

2.4.1 The Definition of Diaspora

The term diaspora refers to the dispersion of people from their original homeland. The Webster's New International Dictionary defines the term referring to the dispersion of any group of people who hold a common national origin or a common belief that migrated from a country of origin to another region/country. The dispersion of the diaspora can be seen in two ways. These are: the first generation and their offspring. The first generation refers to the direct immigrants to the country for various reasons: for instance resettlement by United Nations in a third country or for business purposes moving from country to a country or searching for jobs or through countries that initiate immigration based on certain conditions and with some other similar reasons. For instance "….you may migrate to Canada if you have 100,000 USD to invest in that country or you can move to Sweden if you are a qualified medical doctor (Kalra, et.al 2005: 15)." In both cases, the system is benefit oriented toward receiving paybacks, which includes a give-take to move to these countries. The second diaspora groups are

the offspring of the first residents, who were born in exile after full settlements of the first immigrants.

Various factors force people to leave their countries of origin, for instance, the economic problems to seek a better working area, catastrophic events caused by political problems in their country of origin especially when they are actively involved in politics for the freedom of citizens, and when the government starts fissuring their roles in the communities. Especially, when they are imprisoned, tortured and killed. A case in current Ethiopian politics is a good example. The government accuses many political activists, political organizations, supporters, journalists and most opposition political parties of terrorism, including the OLF (Oromo Liberation Front); a political organization that struggles for the freedom of the large Oromo nation in the horn of Africa. The accusation and limitless oppression that is targeting political activists, journalists and thousands of supporters in the Ethiopian have made many of the citizen refugees in neighboring and other countries to seek a safe environment.

The diasporic understanding has diverse ways (Kalra, S; et.al 2005). These are diaspora by ethnicity or by the region in connection to their transnational links. Of course, the regional diasporic understanding link is very broad and it also includes the ethnic diaspora. It does not only refer to some limited social group. It is a group of various ethnicities which collectively represent them in one name probably in one country. For example, all blacks from Africa are referred to the African diaspora, which collectively represent the African nations. Pre-1991, Ethiopian and Eritrean had been altogether called the Ethiopian diaspora. But, after the Eritrean got their independence, the Eritreans have been called the Eritrean diaspora. The regional links of diasporic understandings for both countries labeled them to different environmental setting in the Eastern part of Africa to the Ethiopian geographical location and to the Eritrean geographical location.

2.5   The Oromo Diaspora

Even if some writers indicates "…..diasporic understanding, by focusing on transnational links and emphasizing a multiplicity of belongings and identities, can challenge the fixity of identity invoked by ethnicity" (Kalra, S, et.al 2005: 16), it seems the case of the Oromo diaspora is quite different. As to the present existing realities indicate the ethnic diasporic identity has also a very magnificent role, and even explores the converse concept. For instances, the reflections of the Oromos in diaspora to their identity portrays the facts about the strong part of ethnic identity in exile. Most of the Oromos in the North America and in the other parts of the world are the prominent paradigms. Most of them prefer to be called the Oromo diaspora rather than the Ethiopian diaspora. In fact, most Oromos in the disapora support the struggle to make an independent Oromian state. So far, as the observed facts indicate both communities who classify themselves as the Ethiopian diaspora (the Amhara and the Tigrian in particular as well as some other minority group of the Ethiopian ethnicities) and the Oromo (the majority group in Ethiopia) have their own independent communities in exile. It seems there is an imaginary boundary between them which also gives a paramount figure for the Oromo ethnic disaporic identity as well. Of course, there are also a few numbers of Oromo in exile who also classify themselves under the Ethiopian diasporic identity.

Most of the Oromo disapora communities believe in the struggle for freedom to create a sovereign Oromian state. For instance, as some sources indicate only very few Oromo attend the Ethiopian community meetings or any other social gatherings. The Oromo have their own sense of belonging the Oromo community that widely focuses on the Oromo issues, and works for the social and political benefit of the Oromo community. A case in point, in a meeting sponsored by the *Ginbot 7* group (a current right wing in the Ethiopian politics) in Houston, USA, only three Oromo showed up[8]. Similarly, the Oromo in Norway also call themselves the Oromo diaspora. When they demonstrate against the Ethiopian government as a tyrant in their host countries, most Oromo come

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[8]Seifenabalbal radio Voice aired on March 2, 2012

with an OLF flag,[9] while the Ethiopian diaspora who specifically refer themselves as Habasha carry the Ethiopian flag.

On the other hand, the foreign understanding of the Ethiopian diaspora seems that it is limited to a single ethnic group whether knowingly or unknowingly. The perception looks as if everyone from Ethiopia is Amhara and speaks Amharic. Indeed, the earlier figure that the Abyssinian also known as the Habesha, elites have done stimulate the dominance of a single ethnic group over the others. On the contrary, the majority have been forgotten in the eyes of the outsiders. The self-contained focuses that the state media and the Abyssinians had paid to a specific ethnic group magnified their name above others. Conversely, the other indigenous nations of the country were neglected and considered as a second citizen in their country. Apart from this, they had been undermined, called by a name that they do not deserve and have been called uncivilized and uncultured. These were some of the harrowing events in the Ethiopian politics. In a similar way to the earlier context, it is also appearing in a different approach in today's Ethiopian politics as well. Only a specific ethnic group is favored in political and business roles. The situation is awakening other Ethiopian nations and the Oromos., Thus, the Oromos are working more to explore their *Oromummaa* (Oromoness) identity to the world through various means. The new Oromo generation is struggling to gain self-right. They are defying the existing situations by emphasizing on the Oromo ethnic diasporic identity over the Ethiopian diasporic identity.

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[9] For instance March 2, 2012 both communities demonstrate against the Ethiopian government in Norway. However, they were even not in the same line. While the Oromo carry the OLF flag the other group carries the Ethiopian flag who classify themselves as Habasha.

2.6   Multiculturalism

Multiculturalism is a cultural mosaic that contrasts the assmillationism which is a melting pot of culture within a certain cultural environment.   It applies to the demographic make-up of specific place that has a diversified cultural setting. It is a doctrine that encourages various cultures to live separate; but, within the same environmental framework.

Our globe is becoming more of a human miscellany. The human movement is ever increasing for a number of reasons. Thus, many societies everywhere are becoming multicultural. Along with the continuous movement of people from place to place, new multicultural communities that apparently have majority and minority status are emerging rapidly. In spite of this, there are also attempts by the minority group to maintain their original cultures where they reside to educate the generation to come through various ways of communication.

On the other hand, there is also a need from both sides (the majority and the minority) for assimilation or integration. However, what are the norms into which the minorities are being asked to integrate is the question (Silj, 2010: 21).   Integration on mutual respect and reasonable knowledge is a unity. Yet, the issues are neglected in favor of a focus on the beliefs and conduct of minorities (ibid, 2010). Nonetheless, it becomes exceedingly prominent where multiculturalism is proposed as a model for integration to consider the hidden demands of the minority questions as well.

Multiculturalism has many contexts. Accordingly, it is defined based on the contexts at hand. It relates to social, political, policy and ethnic matters in divergent ways. Collectively it describes the heterogeneous cultures that include many ethnicities and various languages within it that follow distinct styles, customs, norms and values; but live within the same place. For instance in Canada, the term was first introduced to refer to the relationship between the Anglophone and Francophone population of Canada and to give the same right to both populations to exercise their cultures.

Multicultural environment has also a high potential for sharing and interchanging the cultural values in unlike contexts with various other cultures around. It provides the same right for every community to create a real sense of diversified cultural scenery. It

encourages the societies to strive for equality and freedom for all communities based on mutual respect, although there would be some cultural differences. It provides a clear understandings and tolerances among them. It inspires them to articulate the concerns of their community with definite reasonable effects politically, socially or economically. Taylor, in his book entitled Multiculturalism: examining the politics of recognition, states some virtues of the multicultural community that stand for freedom and equality in the following:

> *"Multicultural societies and communities that stand for the freedom and equality of all people rest upon mutual respect for reasonable intellectual, political and cultural differences. Mutual respect requires a widespread willingness and ability to articulate our disagreements, to defend them before people with whom we disagree, to discern the difference between the respectable and disrespectable disagreement and to be open to changing our own minds when faced with well-reasoned criticism"* (Taylor, 1992: 24).

The deliberative virtues stated above are elements that support the moral premises of the multicultural settings. These days, within the domain of such virtues, most countries are providing legal authority for the immigrants to officially exercise their original cultures. In some regions, immigrants have also been encouraged to teach their children their languages and cultures. Furthermore, the governments subsidize the local authorities to encourage multicultural attitudes by providing accesses for the immigrants in various ways; for example by hosting cultural show days, at a place various ethnic group shows their cultural performances or some other ways of identity reflection in public in an area where diversified ethnic groups live.

There is a saying that praises multiculturalism, i.e. *"Our difference is our beauty, our beauty is our unity"*. The saying promotes the variety of cultural values that advocates multiculturalism. Indeed, there are a few individuals who have big concerns to struggle and to advocate on the importance of multiculturalism- notably the scholars in the area and some other intellectuals and leaders. On the other hand, there are also a number of

critics conversely from few racist/extremist[10] or from the right wing side that instantly discourages multiculturalism as well.

According to Bahbha (1996: 55), "Multiculturalism is the most charged sign for describing the scattered social contingencies that characterizes contemporary *kulturkritik."* Therefore, diasporic environment is a typical multicultural area where differentiation and condensation happen almost synchronically. The cultural differentiations appear in the living style of someone through the norms and values that are internalized by certain identified cultural practices of the communities. Of course, these cultural differences may limit the individual chances of living with others unless there is cultural condensation. Cultural condensation encourages chances of multicultural understanding in the multicultural environment by building tolerance and appreciating all cultural values found nearby. It also appears to be an area to experience multicultural moments which apparently plays a great role even for building new identities. "The diaspora experience [....] is defined not by essence or purity but by the recognition of a necessary heterogeneity and diversity; by a conception of identity which lives with and through, not despite, difference; by hyberidity (Shukla: 2006: 77). As to Fludernik (2003) states, the dynamic processes evolve in the diasporic life than the essential conception of identities. She demonstrates that "the diaspora cultures enact necessary changes from essentialist conception of identity to a focus of dynamic exchanges between people and cultures; moreover that it acknowledges the hybridity contingency and mixing of contemporary identities, cultures and societies" (Fludernik 2003: 288).

Apart from the mutual respect of cultural values and certain benefits that a one gets by learning from one another in the multicultural setting, some scholars (e.g Guibernau and Rex, 1997) suggest the importance of being born in multicultural environment as a beneficial for future careers as well. They point out that as children grown up in multicultural environment are at least bilingual, which could help them in their future careers in diverse aspects.

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[10] For instance, a tragedy happened on the Norwegians innocent citizens on 22 July, 2011 is one of the fact.

2.7   Assimilation

The concept assimilation is a little different from the concept multiculturalism. These days it is considered a contested idea by most people. Of course, it is not denied that it was one of the foundational concepts to study ethnic relations in the fields of the social sciences more importantly by sociologists. The early influential definition by Ernest W. Burgess quoted in Gordon (1964: 62) call it "a process of interpretation and fusion in which persons and groups acquire the memories, sentiments, and attitudes of other persons or groups, and, by sharing their experience and history, are incorporated with them in a common cultural life." The earlier era concept of assimilation is now condemned due to the expectation that the minority group inevitably wants to shed their cultures (Alba, et.al 2003: 19). Above all among most people the connotation given to assimilation is mostly negative. Some even think that it is forfeiting of one's own cultural values and becoming someone else with a complete cultural reformation, even though the earlier influential definition stated that it was a sharing of the experiences. It seems the practical situation was different from the sociological concepts among most people in practical senses. In the other social science dictionary, the definition of social assimilation indicates the merging of many cultures into a single domain which may favor the dominance of the majority and may also erase the minority cultural values that could give reasonable argument for those who give a negative connotation to the social assimilation. According to Gordon (1964: 64), "Assimilation is the process by which different cultures or individuals or groups representing different cultures are merged into a homogeneous unit". Social assimilation does not actually mean the total identification; rather it is the social modification of certain characters. For the newly arrived it is becoming members of a new society by forfeiting one's own cultural values and it is accepting of total cultural values and characters of the host countries. On the other hand, for the host country's culture, it is the elimination of the foreign origin of cultural values and enabling them all to fit smoothly into the typical structure of the existing social cultural values for the new arrivals. It is also a substitution of one's cultural pattern to another.

2.8   Identity

Identity discourses have been interpreted in multiple ways. It is argued that the notion of identity appeared long time ago before 1600s (Bamberg, 2007: 43). Scholars (e.g Benwell and Stoke 2006) identify two historical periods in western history; the seventeenth century's age of reasoning or enlightenment and the nineteenth century which is known as the Romantic Movement for the birth of identity which is exclusively linked to the construction of the "self".

Currently, scholars in social sciences and humanities are also working intensely on questions of identity. So far they have interpreted an identity in various ways in relation to personality, ethnic, political backgrounds 'identity politics of race, gender and sexuality" and so forth. According to Fearon (1999: 1), questions of identity mark numerous arguments on gender, sexuality, nationality, ethnicity and culture in relation to liberalism and its alternatives.

The American Heritage Dictionary defines identity as the set of behavioral or personal characteristics by which an individual is recognizable as a member of the group. On the other hand, scholars of political science and international relations have defined identity as the way individuals and groups defined themselves and are defined by others on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, language and culture (Deng, 1995: 1). Both definitions describe how the relationship to individuals or groups based on certain specific matters as per the desires they have.

Scholars (e.g. Hall 1990) agree that there is no unified identity from birth to death. Hall argues it is only that we construct a comforting, imagined story or a narrative of the selves about ourselves. For Hall, identity is not a biological; it is a historical construction. He states, "the subject assumes different identities at different times, identities that are not unified around a coherent self (Hall 2006)." Identity performance is not a matter of articulating one identity at a time; rather it is the mobilization of a whole repertoire of identity features… (Blommaert, 2005: 232)

Bamberg, 2007 sees the concept of identity a fluid, which is not fixed or static in a moment or specific context. It is a means to identify the uniqueness of someone through characteristics or action that he or she does within the living environment in a definite

culture. Thus, the imagined unified identity that is thought to be the coherent conception is a fantasy (Hall 2006) as it is natural to have multiple identities developed through times and situations. Therefore, the old ethno nationalist ways of constructing identity to specific belonging is challenged by the multidimensional and swiftly growing concept of the change on identity. Evidences supports such cases are made at different times in the forms of movies to teach societies.   For instance, *Bend it like Beckham* (2002) is among them. The thematic view of the movie focuses on the struggle of a major character (a girl) in the self-desire to present one's self-image in a way she demands; while the family members and society at large try to impose a different position on her. "Identities are also performed/claimed/enacted at the same time; and more importantly, the discourses and practices surrounding the identities are not entirely separate from one another" (Bamberg 2007: 10).

"Diaspora populations are oriented toward the past and haunted by myths of return. This type of haunting, with its attachment to and sometimes overwhelming longing for the loss of home land was a structural features of the diaspora from Ethiopia (Matsuoka, 2001:78)".   Most of the Diaspora intellectuals in the Horn promoted competing nationalism by offering historical or cultural evidence concerning the nations they defend or reject construction of their unique identity. The case of the Eritrean diaspora during pre-1991 (Matsuoka, 2001) and the current Oromo case are good examples. Most African diaspora play identity politics via propaganda, money and weapons. Thus, ethnic identity constructions among some diaspora in the past have made the principal technique for struggle. On the other hand, for simple political benefit some selected painful cases are also purposefully forgotten. Indeed, this helps to construct the new desired identity to gain the political support with hidden agendas which may earnestly support the earlier political philosophy of the country.

Discourse is the term that most sociolinguistic scholars use as an approach for the exploration of identities and selfness. Personally or socially identity is expressed in various ways based on how the individual desires to shape him/herself. Personally it could be in gender, race, profession or religion. Similarly, the social identity could also be scrutinized through social matters. There could be various possibilities that the societies use to describe their specific identities as a nation or as certain community of

some specific ethnic group; or they could express themselves in relation to religion or race.

Personal identity is the 'true self' or the 'real self' of an identity that may not have an outsider impose of the social matters or constraints of the society that could have been acted out of the social obligations. "Personal identity defines who the person is Hopf, (1998: 175)." It is a genuine way of self-expression where the personal feelings expose oneself more to the world. However, such social identity may also be covered and cannot be easily exposed in a limitless way due to certain social and cultural factors. On the other hand, social identity is the cumulative result of the personal identity at where the members of certain group or society define themselves within the group based on certain common grounds. It is the outcome of the person's identity at where the group shares and put an influence on one another that give them a right to do what they have been agreed up on it for the common goals.

The national identity or ethnic identities are an identity that describes the sameness of certain communities or citizens of all nations in all times and places. It refers to the social categories where social living circumstances of cultures are expressed through personal characteristics with which individuals categorize themselves. Broadly speaking, "identity is a social category or a socially distinguishing features or both where it is defined by membership rule, supposedly characteristic attributes or features in which a person takes special pride or views as unchangeable or socially consequential" (Fearon 1999: 36).

Traditionally there are few unidentified stereotypes that people give for certain groups to express certain identity though they may not be accurate. For instance, the identity by which the Westerners are described is different from the way we may describe the Easterners and other African nations. Mostly, the social environment where we grew up shapes our identity the most. There are also certain ways in which a new identity is developed through environmental interaction. Identity references are mutually constructed through evolving images of the self and others (Kowert and Legro 1996: 453). This indicates the fluid nature of an identity that it is not static. An identity construction could develop following certain specific matters. It is a pragmatic shift. For

instance, sometimes, politically passive people become politically strong people when there is a move from certain location to the other locations. The diasporic environment is a good example and most diasporic people have shown the case.

Hall (1990), in his book *Cultural Identity and Diaspora* states two kinds of identity. These are identity as being and identity as becoming. Identity as being refers to a sense of communality, unity and sense of understanding one another, while identity as becoming shows a discontinuity in an identity formation for the process of identification. He also remarks on the incompleteness of identity as never ending process. "Instead of thinking of identity as an already accomplished fact [….] we should think […] of identity as a production which is never complete, always in process (Hall, 1996: 110).

CHAPTER THREE

3. HISTORICAL, SOCIO-POLITICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUNDS OF THE OROMO PEOPLE

The Oromo people constitute about 40% of the Ethiopian population. The largest numbers of Oromo people live in the Oromia regional state, the biggest regional state in Ethiopia that was reformed after the fall of a military junta Derge regime in 1991. Indeed, substantial numbers of Oromo people also live in the other regional states of the country. Currently, the country has nine regional states. Apart from this, considerable numbers of the Oromo people, about 4 million also live in Kenya (Servan, 2008: 1).

Oromo are the single largest ethnonation in the eastern part of Africa (Appiah & Gates, 1999; Hassen, 1990, 1996) that lived for millennia (Prouty at.al, 1981) keeping their culture, values and norms which apparently follow the egalitarian political systems-*Gada* (Leggesse 1973). Due to the limited resources, the pre-16th century Oromo history is almost inexistent. Some argue that Oromo were unknown before the 16th century though they hardly bring facts to support their argument (Hussien 2006: 256-276; ኃይላመሪያም (2004 E.C). Nevertheless, "the physical, cultural, socio-political and religious identities of the Oromo clearly indicate that they are indigenous to the region (Hussien 2006: 256-276)." As the existing facts (e.g Bates 1979) also indicate, "Oromo are the indigenous stock of the ancient race that, perhaps, on which most other people of the eastern part of Africa have been grafted". By supporting the existing evidence, Baxter (1985), also states that Oromo were the ancient society of the region demonstrating that, "…the cradle land of the Oromo was in the cool grasslands of southern Ethiopia where they lived as pastoral stockmen". On the contrary, some Abyssinian rulers, the court historian and monks distorted, omitted and demonized the facts of Oromo history and presented it in a distorted way only to inspire their political agenda on the Oromo land.

The Ethiopian empire state was formed through a war. In a war that lasted from 1870-1900, the Oromo were defeated and they lost all of their land, both to the Minlik the Abyssinians warlord (who were significantly assisted by the modern European weaponry of the time to conquer the southern territories) and to Great Britain (Servan,

2008: 12). The Abyssinian conquerors' progress toward the southern parts of the country was full of atrocities and mutilations which was completely different from the contemporary European colonial rules observed in the other parts of the world and even in the horn of Africa. De Salaviac, quoted in Jalata (2010), explains the atrocities of the Abyssinians during their expansions toward the Oromo land by indicating their ruthless actions in the Oromo land and towards the Oromo people. "The charming Oromo land, [would] be ploughed by the iron and the fire flooded with blood and the orgy of pillage" (De Salaviac, 2005, [1901]: 349). He calls the event "a theater of the great massacre" by inferring the brutality of the situation as follows:

> "The conduct of the Abyssinian armies invading the land is simply barbaric. They contrive a sudden irruption, more often at night. At day break the fire begins; surprised men in the huts or in the fields are three quarter massacred and horribly mutilated; the women and the children and many men reduced to captivity; the soldiers lead the frightened herds toward the camp to take away the grain and the flour which they load on the shoulders of their prisoners spurred on by blows of the whip, destroy the harvest, then, glutted with booty and intoxicated with blood, go to walk a bit further from the devastation. That is what they call civilizing a land." (De Salviac, 2005: 349) quoted in Jalta, 2010.

As a result of war, a number of resources were abandoned and a number of Oromo people were displaced. For instance, in only a six years' period of war in Arsi, about 100,000 Oromo were killed Melba (1980: 43) as cited in the book entitled '*The Oromo Nation',* (1998). In the same citation, the Ghanaian historian, Kofi Darkwah (1978: 95) support these evidences and present the atrocity of Abyssinians indicating what happened in a single day of clash of Arsi Oromo; "….about 12,000 Arsi warriors were left dead after a single battle which took place in September 6, 1886." In spite of lacking the modern weapons that the Abyssinians had, the Oromo people fought back to defend their land. Arsi was one of the strong places that Minilik the Abyssinian war Lord and his followers were strongly opposed though they at last fell under him in 1886.

A year later, in 1887, all strong Oromo men and women were ordered to come to a place called Anole, about 25 km North of Asela, under the pretext of reconciliation by the Abyssinian General Ras Darge. Anole was a very strategic place. Under normal circumstances, Oromo do not come to that place. Therefore, the place was deliberately

chosen for the odious crime to take revenge on them. Here is what Abbas Haji stated about the Arsi Oromo and the effects of war on them:

> *"*When the people came, the unarmed Arsi were told to enter to the narrow pass one by one. All males who entered had their right hands cut off on orders of Ras Darge……. the cut hand was hung around the neck of the victim. In the same manner, the right breasts of the women were also cut off and tied around their necks. As a result all Arsi men and women who came to Anole had their right hand and right breast cut off, respectively. This is widely known as "*Harka mura Anole*" Abbas Haji, 1982, Cited in The Oromo Nation book (1998).

In the same year, 1887, the Minilik defeated the *Harar* Oromos in *Calanqo* by killing dozens of the Oromos. Soon after the defeat, he sent a letter to his wife Teyitu Butul indicating his contentment at conquering the other Oromo lands through genocide. Then, after the arrival of the letter, hearing the victory in *Calanqo* Teyitu renamed the name Finfinne to Addis Ababa[11].

Minilik, after he conquered the entire Oromo land, in spite of promoting the development in the country, he had bitterly killed the Oromos and enslaved them and sold them to those who promoted slavery. The BBC report that aired on 25 August 2011, confirms this by indicating that, "Emperor Menelik II, who has been described as Ethiopia's "greatest slave entrepreneur", taxed the trade to pay for guns and ammunition as he battled for control of the whole country, which he ruled from 1889 to 1913[12]." The other evidence also portrays the human tragedy and the destruction of the Oromo communal value resentfully by the Abyssinians in the following ways:

> "The Abyssinians in bloody raids operated by surprise mowing down without pity, in the country of the Oromo population, a mournful harvest of slaves for which the Muslims were thirsty and whom they bought at very high price. An Oromo child [boy] would cost up to 800 francs in Cairo; an Oromo girl would be worth two thousand francs in Constantinople." (De Salviac, 2005: 28)

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[11]Professor Mohammed Hassen: Speech on the 50th anniversary of the Arfan Qallo music and art club in Canada, Toronto on June 30, 2012. Afran Qallo was the theatrical and musical group organized by the Oromo youths in 1962 who were against the tyrants and had been singing songs that shows the Oromo resistances to the tyrants.

[12] BBC News available online, accessed in March, 2012

Then, following the Oromo defeat, the Abyssinian court historian Alaqa Taye (1955), cited in UOSE (1997), to distort the Oromo history alleged that the "Oromo migrated from Madagascar, entered Africa via Mombasa and spread north Eastwards in the fourteenth and sixteenth century." Moreover, the Abyssinian clergies even contended that the Oromo emerged from the water (UOSE, Finland branch, 1997) which is totally misguiding and a fairytale to hide the reality of the Oromo origin by saying human beings are emerged from water (Ocean), and which is very far from the existing scientific facts just for the sake of keeping a single ethnic group's interest over the other nations and to disdain the nation's name and to create an inferiority complex among the then unlettered people. Baxter (1985), remarked, ".... the contention that the Oromo had actually emerged from water and therefore, had not evolved to the same level of the community as the Amhara (i.e. treating an origin myth as a historical fact); or, more seriously, that Oromo were late-comers to Ethiopia and hence, by implication, intruders and therefore not as entitled to be there as Amhara."

On the other hand, some scholars like (Perham, 1948) state the existence of Oromo in the North eastern part of Africa even before the arrival of Habasha (the Abyssinians). "….the emigrant Semites landed on a continent of the north-east appears to have been inhabited by the eastern groups of Hamites, often called cushites, who also include the [Oromo] cited in UOSE, (1997). Most scholars (e.g Paulitsche, 1889, Greenfield 1965, Lynch and Robbins, 1978) demonstrate evidences that strongly support the existence of Oromo in the Horn of Africa in their literatures.

Above all, the Abyssinian-centered historians presented the Oromo origin and movements in a distorted form. Following this, a few western writers also accepted the biased record and passed it to the world. For instance, they presented the Oromo movements of the 16th century as aimless human explosion on the Christian kingdom taking advantage of the Muslim-Christian war. However, historical and ethnographic evidence shows that the reverse is quite true. Oromos are indigenous to the horn of the African people and started movement for expansion to the other part of the region in a well-developed and structured ways by assimilating with whom they met on their way (Hassen, 1990; Blackhurst 1996 cited in Hussien, 2006).

The Oromos are an abandoned people in their own country since the Ethiopian empire state was formed through war. They became subjugated under Abyssinians. They become subject on their father's land. They have never benefited from the Ethiopian politics though they are the majority people of the country; rather they lost even their natural right of exercising their cultures freely to their highest demand by using their language following the defeat by the Abyssinians.

Similar to the past Ethiopian authoritarian leaders, the current Tigray led the authoritarian terrorist regime also implement the same policy over the Oromo people and refuse them freedom of expressions (Jalata, 2011). Those who speak for the freedom of the people have been killed. If not, they are imprisoned; then tortured dangerously and prone to humiliations.

The government has been technically accusing the journalists, political activists and the other political party supporters apart from EPRDF in the name of terrorists to seek the western attention, and to extend the power for years by subjugating the voices of voiceless citizens through pseudo terrorist accusations. For instance, the very recent genocide that happened to the Oromos in the West Arsi zone, in the Assassa town that left dead more than four people and injured more than 10 people on April 27, 2012 by the Ethiopian federal policies on unarmed innocent civilians is one of the facts that show the endless brutality of the regime on Oromo people. Surprisingly, some eyewitnesses also speak of how the Oromos are more tortured by the Ethiopian government than the other Ethiopian people in the country. For instance, Siye Abraha, the former TPLF (Tigray People Liberation Front) executive body and the former Ethiopian Defense Minister since EPRDF came to power witnessed that on January 5, 2008 in Virginia, U.S.A as more of the prisoners are Oromos by stating '*Esir Betu Oromigna yinageral'* literally translated, the Prison speaks the Oromo Language (Jaalata, 2011) which testifies that how the Oromos are abused maliciously in their country and forcibly leaves their country to seek safe environments in other parts of the world.

Additionally, some other existing data as shown in the graphs below illustrate the human rights violation in Ethiopia according to the type of violation and the regions since 1995-2005, which also clearly indicates that how the Oromos are maliciously abused in the Ethiopia empire state. Both figures are adapted from Jalata, 2011 ''The Oromo in Exile: Creating Knowledge and Promoting Social Justice.''

Figure 1 Accumulated reported human rights violations in Ethiopia as per regional state and type of violations, 1995–2005.
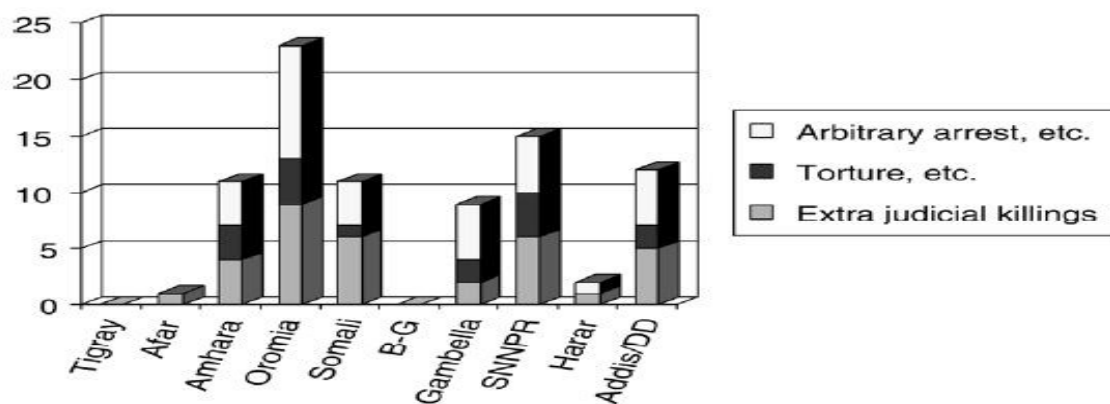
Source for both graphs: (Tronvoll, Human Rights Violations in Federal Ethiopia: When Ethnic Identi-ty is a Political Stigma). Cited in Susan Yirku, August 5, 2010, Maryrhurst University, _An Argument for U.S. Policy Support for a Free Ethiopian Media, 'http://addisvoice.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/Ethiopia-_Support_for_.pdf, accessed on February 4, 2011

Figure 2 Trends in regional distribution of reported human rights violations in Ethiopia, 1995–2005.
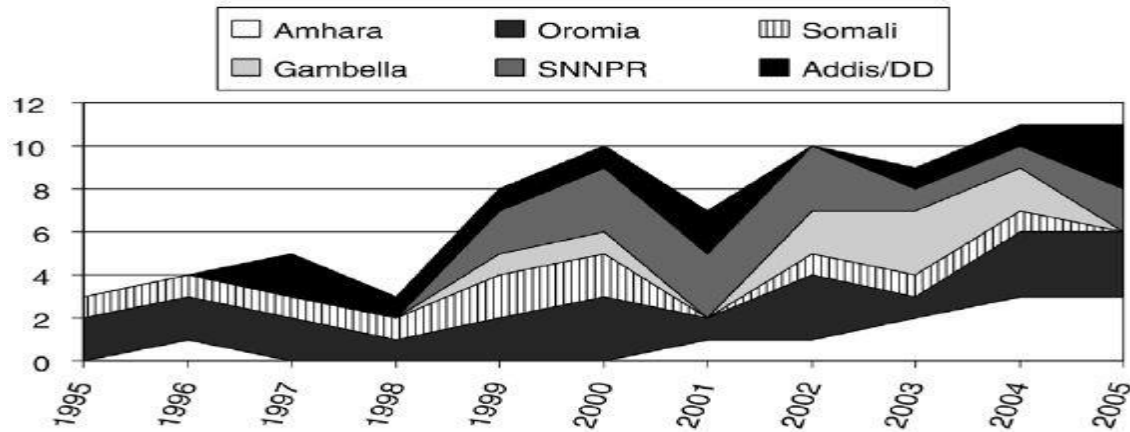
Source for both graphs: (Tronvoll, Human Rights Violations in Federal Ethiopia: When Ethnic Identi-ty is a Political Stigma). Cited in Susan Yirku, August 5, 2010, Maryrhurst University, An Argument for U.S. Policy Support for a Free Ethiopian Media, 'http://addisvoice.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/Ethiopia-_Support_for_.pdf, ac-cessed on February 4, 2011

3.1   The Oromo Language

The Oromo language is one of the East Cushitic languages of the Afro-Asiatic language family. Some recent finding indicates that the Oromo language is the most widely spoken language that ranked fourth in Africa after Arabic, Hausa and Swahili languages[13] though Gada Malba(1988b: 90 and Mahdi (1995: xi), classify as the third widely spoken language in Africa. Most of the language speakers are found in Ethiopia. Apart from this, the language is also spoken in Kenya, Somalia and Tanzania in the eastern part of the African continent. The language has variety of dialects. The key dialects of the language are Arsi, Borana, Guji, Harar, Munyo, Orma, Raya, Tulama, Waataa and Wallagga. The Oromo language uses 'Qubee' a Latin script that is based on the Roman orthography.

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[13] (http://www.lmp.ucla.edu/Profile.aspx?menu=004&LangID=211 visited on April 2012)

Map1: Traditional Oromo Territory[14]
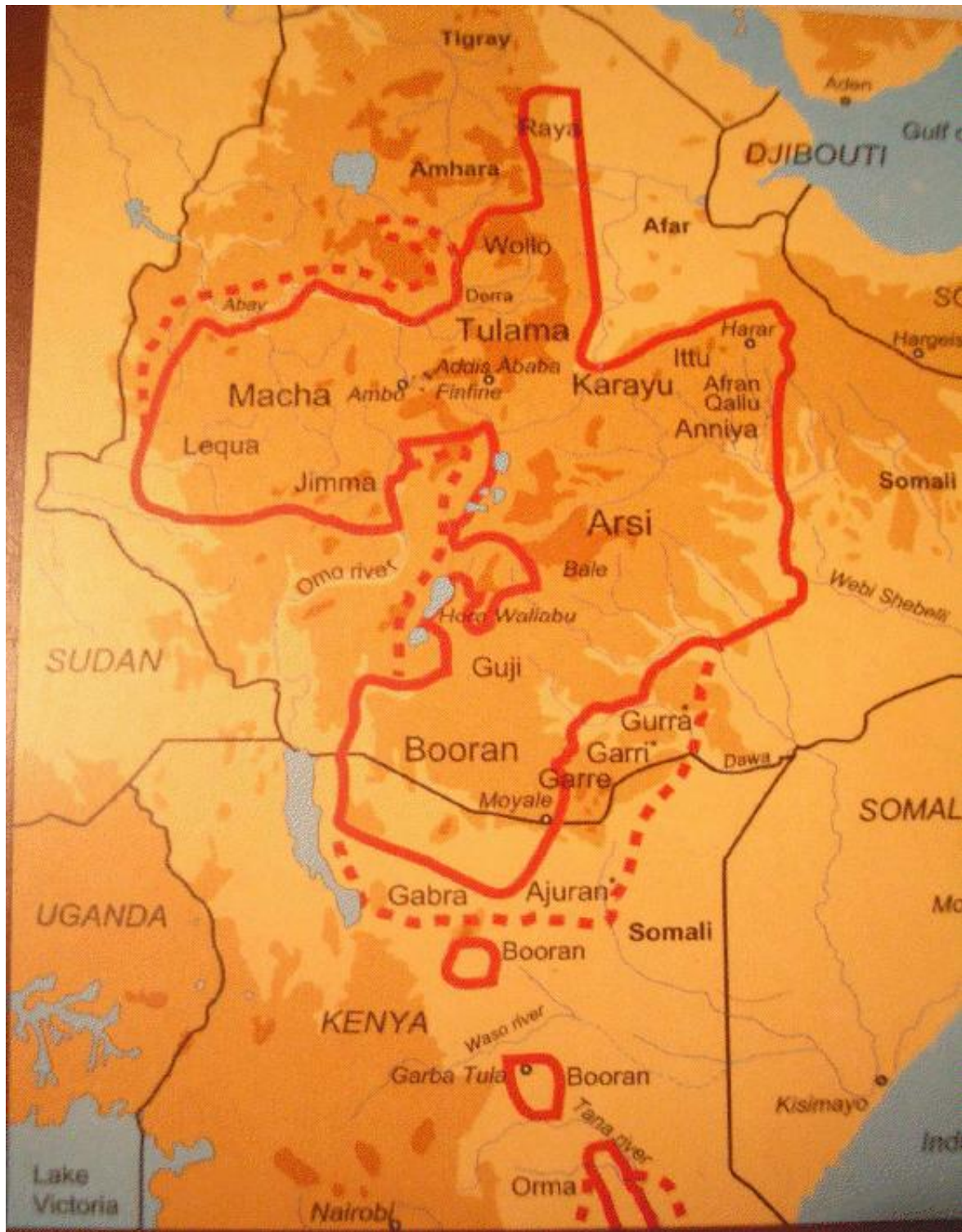
3.2 The Oromo *Jaarsumma* (Traditional Oromo Conflict Management)

These days, various research works have given emphasis on conflict prevention, resolution and management. So far a number of interesting literature works have been produced by a number of academic and scholars -notably by western scholars. Conversely, research works on conflict is very few in developing countries. Moreover, the attention given to the indigenous conflict management is minimal. Indeed, the indigenous conflict management is effective in dealing with interpersonal or inter-community conflicts as far as the approach concerned every detail of the situation based on the society's norm and custom. It is effectively used at a grass root level to settle conflicts among the people focusing on culture, custom and norms.

Traditionally most African communities have their own ways of conflict management systems according to the cultural values of their citizens. Oromo people are one of the African communities that use traditional ways of conflict management which they call '*Jaarsumma*'- a well-structured system. The word *jaarsumma* is derived from an adjective '*Jaarsa*' in Oromo language and the suffix '–mma'. "In Oromo language, adjectives are identical to nouns because most Oromo adjectives have a gender; they are either masculine or feminine, even those referring not to people" (Roba, T. 2004). By assimilation process the letter 'a' changes to 'u' and the adjective *Jaars*- add the suffix –mma and forms a new word that refers to the council of elders *'jaarsumma'*. Most nouns ending in –a in the Oromo language shows masculinity (Roba, T 2004). *Jaarsa* means a male elder/elderly in Oromo Language. Culturally, elders are the most respected persons in the community.

Jaarsumma is a collection of *jaarsa biyya* (elders of the country which is also called the council of elders) to manage conflict existing at any level. The *jaarsa biyyaa* in the council are not necessarily the elderly people, and they are also not fixed to an explicit community group. They could be from any members of the communities as long as they have the capacity to analyze the cases at hand meticulously with the rest of *Jaarsa biyya*/elders. Thus, anyone involved in the conflict management and reconciliation (*Jaarsummaa*) process with *Jaarsa biyya* is collectively called *Jaarsa* regardless of the age he is in actual life. Among the Oromo, the community's attitude toward the *Jaarsa biyya* is very respectful in various aspects.

In earlier times, written documents can hardly be found among African communities including in the Oromo people. Histories and cultures (rituals, values and norms in the communities) were transferred through oral forms from generation to generation. Elders were the walking libraries that documented everything in their mind including the constitution (*seera tuma*). Due to this fact a *Jaarsa biyyaa* is considered as a center of lessons and experiences from which the new generations learn, and he shares with everyone what he accumulated in his life-time. Knowledge passes through the generations in the same way. Elders are considered to be wiser and responsible for teaching, resolving conflicts, and nurturing Oromo culture. Of course, seniority is an important factor in Oromo relationships. Similarly, Hebo demonstrates *Jarsa biyya* as follows: "Elderly members of the communities are respected for their knowledge of customary laws, and are perceived as symbols of wisdom, peace and reconciliations (Hebo 2005: 125-135)."

In the broad concepts of conflict resolution, especially on resources and boundary conflict, the *Jaarsummaa* council includes various experts like *Hayyuu* (expert of customary law) and *woyyuu* (spiritual dispute settler). But, on interpersonal conflict and some other unpretentious conflicts these higher expertise are not mandatory; the other *Jaarsa biyya* staffs around the communities can manage it.

In the council of elders (*Jaarsa biyyaa*) there are different ranks. These ranks are *Abba Murtii/abba Halange* (the judge), *Qora* (the facilitators/investigators) who usually asks the conflicted individuals any question with respect to the law and customs in relation to the cases at hand for better analysis and for finding a reasonable solution for the cases. The other participants are bystanders who scrutinize the procedures and give comments on the issues in discussion if necessary by saying '*gungume*' (which means let me say some words') - either to comment on issues after observing both sides of the situation or to guide the facilitators on to the right path or even to criticize them. Mostly, those who come up to the floor by saying '*gungume*' are supported for giving evidences whenever they assume the facilitators are missing the directions expected to follow in resolving/ mediating the conflict. They could also represent one of the disputants or could be neutral for both disputants. They are similar to voters. The direction that most voters support through '*Gungumee*' guides the judge where to focus and where to put the

decision. A person who comes to the floor by saying '*gungume*' always has the green light; which means at any time he says '*gungume*' he can present his views. For instance, if he needs to correct the facilitators on points they may make unclear and very confident on what to comment regarding the cases, he says, "Hold on there"; then the facilitators stop talking. Then he gives the suggestion and leaves the floor for the facilitators again. Then the *qora* (the facilitators) continues.

Elders may voluntarily help or come by requests of the parties of conflicts. Both conflicted parties bring *Jaarsa* to represent them. They (the disputants/the conflicted individuals) inform everything that dissatisfied them to their *Jaarasa* on pre-*Jaarsummaa* process or even while the *Jaarsumma* process is going on. The *Jaarsa biyya* from both sides works cautiously to bring the balanced reconciliation and to bring a long lasting harmony among the parties of the conflicts. *Jaarsa biyyaa* try to minimize the destructions and look for positive effects in a reasonable way to construct a beautiful harmony among conflicted individuals.

The implementation of traditional systems along with the existing court systems; which is the western system has more of beneficial implications. For instance in the case of Ethiopia, the modern court system follows the Western techniques more than the indigenous African way of conflict arbitrating. Practicing the indigenous systems is one way of exploring one's own cultural values and identity. The traditional mechanisms could give a simple understanding to the communities who have no clue about the modern ways of conflict management, and it minimizes the complex nature of conflict arbitrating systems. It could also give clear information for the citizens for better cooperative ways of conflict arbitration as well.

Our globe is embellished by different cultures. The varieties of the existing cultures also give beautiful shape to our planet. Our cultural variety could vary on how we implement, involve on conflict resolution, the principles we follow and the cultures we live in; that shape us in different fashion from one another. Cultural variations not only shape our perception of conflicts and conflict management; but determine techniques to be implemented in the conflict management as well. Above all, the traditional conflict management process is considered to be the integral part of culture that goes with the

norms, values and customs of the community. The process takes steps from interpersonal communication and goes beyond.

3.3   Oromo Women Role in *'Jaarsummaa'*

There is no respect of gender in conflict. Whenever there is an incompatible situation among individuals or certain parties, conflict exists irrespective of color, sex, race and religion as long as there are difficult moments.

In modern society, conflict management is not a question of gender. It is a concern for both sexes. Men and women equally participate in the management process. However, in the traditional era, it had a different form from the existing trend. For instance, some existing literature (e.g. Colleir 1978; Tuso, 2000; Women and Peace in Africa published by UNESCO, 2003) indicate the marginality of African women in the formal decision making forum beyond their society's level due to the dominance of men; although their contribution for conflict management is considered in other ways, for instance as peace messengers and through the *Siinqee*[15] institution in the case Oromo women.

Cultural variety has impacts on how certain communities construct gender. In Oromo, family is one of the institutions of the community. Of course, it is also the center where the gender stratification is learned. There are various other cultural attitudes and practices that reflect gender construction (Hussien, 2004). Among some communities, since the very moment of the first baby birth the gender is differentiate whether the baby is a boy or a girl; for instance, the *Arsi* Oromo. They indoctrinate the boys into masculinity and the girls into femininity. In the *Arsi* Oromo, the midwives immediately declare the baby's sex. Midwives are not expected to say the baby's sex in words. They use an emblem that is well known by the community. Thus, societies can easily identify the baby's sex from ululates the midwives make. The midwives ululate five times and four times; for the baby boy and the baby girl respectively. Conversely, the situation hardly appears among the *Borana* Oromos who are still practicing the *Gada* System

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[15] Siinqee is the Oromo women solidarity

closer to the Original; thus, the boys are never indoctrinated unless they pass the '*dabbale*'[16] grade (Hussien, 2004).

Among most Oromo communities, boys are considered as the defenders in case warriors come to the country. They are the future hopes for heavy work demands. Above all, they are considered to be the future bread winners for the families by withstanding all the hardships.

Family institution is the basic school that shapes the future life of anyone apart from the lessons learnt in modern schools in academics or in other ways. The responsibility constructs in the family will grow with a person. The social stratification learnt at a lower level guides the future generation. If there is inequality or equality among the families between the husband and wife, children share that habit with the adults. When they grow up in a family that portrays equality they build confidence in one another and accept equality of men and women apart from the gender differences; and it becomes their innate part. Probably the opposite is true for a kid who grows up in a family that portrays inequality among boys and girls as well.

In Oromo language, the husband is called *Abbaa manaa* (father of the house), and the wife is called *Hadha manaa* (mother of the house). Of course, such social stratum is common among most communities. But, it may be different on the division of jobs held in the communities. In the Oromo case, traditionally *Abbaa manaa* is the manager of the house who is responsible for economy and has full authority in the family's most decisions. He is the only one who actively takes part in reconciliation in the community through *Jaarsumma*-conflict resolution as well. However, *haadha manaa* (the mother of the house) hardly ever participates in *Jaarsumma*. She is responsible for household activities and for rearing the children in the family.

The traditional Oromo societies consider women as messengers for peace. They are not allowed to participate in areas that require hard work and that demand a tremendous amount of energy. Due to this, they are excluded from the public events, including from the conflict resolution process (Chala, 2002) in the *Jaarsummaa* council. They are

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[16] It is a Gada system where the man is graded according to his age for various social stratums in the Oromo communities.

simply restricted to domestic activities. It could be due to this reason that even the term *Jaarsummaa* itself refers to males only to the exclusion of females. *Jaarsa* is an old man, while *Jaartii* is an old woman. Thus, *Jaarsumma* is derived from *Jaarsa* by adding the suffix –umma. I hope if the system encourages women to public events for conflict management, probably the term itself may be in some other form or word. Thus, the situation in the Oromo social system seems to exclude women from the system. It shows the dominance of men in the traditional Oromo social system of conflict management. Hamdesso Tuso presented the reasons why Oromo women are alienated from the system in the following way, and I maintained his words as follows:

> *"Oromos have developed a complex system relating to the role of women in conflict resolution. In the Oromo social system, women are the only groups that are protected from physical attack by any party in any conflict. They are sacred humans. Thus, women play important roles as messengers of the peace; they organize themselves and physically intervene between the conflicting parties in case of violence they mobilize the community to respond to the situation of conflict quickly and appropriately; and they serve as a moral voice in times of social turmoil (Tuso, 2000:92)"*.

On the other hand, as the *Jaarsuma* process has alienated the Oromo women from the system, similarly there is also another Oromo social system that totally excludes men and allows only women to dominate, which is called the *Siinqee* (Solidarity). The *Siinqee* institution is a means that gives tremendous rights to women in the Oromo traditional social system in *Gada*.

In the *Gada* a check and balance system was built by which *Siinqee* was institutionalized, and women formed a parallel organization of their own which collectively excluded the men (Kumsa, 1997). *Siinqee* is an emblem that is made of a stick and refers to the weapon that an Oromo woman uses to fight for the rights in the *Gada* system. Though the *Siinqee* institution is rarely seen these days, at a time when the Oromo had been following their traditional social system, under the umbrella of *Gada*, Oromo women used to take the *Siinqee* with them to all ceremonial occasions as a symbol of honor (Gemeda, 1998). Gemeda also explained the role of *Siinqee* in the following way:

"In times when safuu[17] is lost and Seera waaqaa(the law of God) is violated, Oromo women use their Siinqee for a rather political purpose. Infringement of women's rights is regarded as the loss of safuu. When the loss of Safuu occurs and a woman's rights are infringed upon, the woman grabs her siinqee, bursts out of the house, and screams. This is known as iyya siinqee (siinqee scream) (Gemeda, 1998:79)."

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[17] In the book the Oromo religion :Myths and Rites of the Western Oromo of Ethiopia-An attempt to understand, Lambert Bartels whites define *safuu* as it stands for everything that we do not understand including a person's evil deeds.[….] people say safuu when they hear of things they do not want to hear. They also say safuu of things they do not understand; it is as if they say: "we do not understand these things. Only Waaqa(God) knows".[…..] its Waaqa's will that Safuu exists. He does not want safuu to disappear from among us. Safuu is something Waaqa and the earth. When the safuu disappears nothing is left"(Bartels 1983).

CHAPTER FOUR

4.   THE RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This study focuses on diaspora, specifically on the Oromo diaspora in Norway. The research methodology is based on grounded theory approach that requires relevant data gathering from specified documents by seeking the needed information from the concerned individuals and other available resources in relation to the research questions designed qualitatively.

"Qualitative research produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantifications referring to research about persons, lives, behavior, but also about organizational functions, social movements or interactional relationships" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990: 17). Qualitative research approach is an obvious ways of data analysis to formulate a ground theory with certain understanding of the people nature, behavior, knowledge and attitudes (ibid). It focuses on a very specific observation of the information about the values, opinions and social contexts of certain populations that goes to the broader generalization of the theories where the conclusions are derived empirically, and inductively analyzed (Burney et.al 2006).

For this qualitative research study, a case study has been induced and the Oromo diaspora that live in Norway has been selected. The case study is one of the crucial methods to observe any natural phenomenon in the set of data (Yin, 2003), and gives a way for an investigation to maintain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real life events. According to (Yin 2003), case study is a conducting of an empirical investigation of the contemporary phenomenon within its natural contexts. I select the single case study method and combine with a grounded theory approach to examine closely the data within a specific context for reliable data investigation.

4.1   Data Collection

To obtain the data for this study different instruments like sampling, interview technique and personal observation have been used.

4.1.1   The Sampling

The study focuses on a specific community, namely the Oromo diaspora. It takes samples from them in Norway. The reasons for choosing this specific Oromo diaspora is, firstly, since I came to this new environment, I found myself more eager to learn about the identities of the Oromos in exile, and how the Oromo diaspora manage conflicts within their communities in their new environmental settings. Secondly, the Oromos in Norway seem they have organized community members, and indeed, I found their own community website online (http://oromocommunityoslo.org/) that they use to release new developments about the Oromo diaspora, the Oromo people in Ethiopia, news that concerns the Oromo in general and the status of the Oromo community in Oslo- Norway in particular. Thirdly, I am an Oromo, and I have therefore some inside information on few specific Oromo identities and the Oromo traditional conflict management system as well. Indeed, I have grownup within the system by observing the *Jaarsummaa* unique procedures since my early childhood. Above all, it is one of the Oromo identity reflections. I used to watch the *Jaarsummaa* procedures by sitting within the *Jaarsa* team to ascertain how they precede. Since then, the *Jaarsummaa* system grew with me, and creates a big interest within me to find knowledge in the area. Lastly, the political situation of the Oromo people, which is one of the triggering points on the Oromo people that have inspired me more to write my thesis on one of the Oromo cases. Thus, I choose them to gain ample information for better knowledge searching in the area.

The sample focuses only on the first Oromo generations in Norway. Because, it is thought that the first generation have clearer ideas and knowledge on the Oromo traditional values than the second generation. Apparently, most of them have strong familiarity with the Oromo traditional conflict arbitrating systems and some of them have also experienced on how the system works while they were in the Oromo country. On top of this, it also provides opportunity to make comparative analysis on their current identity in the new environmental setting with their earlier environmental setting to see whether they develop new identities or maintain their original Oromo identities as well. I choose the generation to see whether they are giving great focuses in the Oromo identity by transferring the cultural values and norms they have to their offspring in the

exile, or they are letting their kids go on their ways apart from the Oromo traditional expectations. To make the data very rich and for better data analysis, individuals who have accumulated experiences on negotiation in traditional conflict management back home and in the diaspora and those who have no experiences back home but have some ideas in traditional conflict management and who have developed experiences in exile were selected for the interview.

I interviewed six individuals, five men and one woman for the study of the data analysis. Their ages ranged between 35-55 years. Each one of the informants has lived in Norway at least for more than ten years except one informant who has lived in exile for more than twenty two years. Although all of them are Oromo in blood, currently all of them are Norwegian citizens. They all speak the Norwegian language. Some of them have professional jobs, and some are daily laborers, working in service areas. Only one of the informants is unemployed; but, he is supported by the Norwegian government. Most of them have gained variety of experiences in exile. They all have also agreed on the struggle they have made for survival and on experiences they have gained so far in the diaspora.

I coded them under upper case and lower cases letters namely A, B, C and a, b, c. The main language of the interview was the Oromo Language (Afaan Oromo) - my mother tongue. Then, I translated the transcribed data precisely to the English language. For most of them, it seems they have fresh memories when they talk about the Oromo tradition and of their Oromoness.

4.1.2 Interview Technique

The study administered an open ended type of interview by including a few questions that follow a closed ended type of interview technique. Apart from this, the researcher used formal and informal interview techniques in the narrative interview in a semi-structured way to allow the interviewee to narrate his or her experiences freely.

The aim of the interview question is to investigate the societal value of the Oromo diaspora group in a different environment from their traditions, and especially to investigate how they construct an identity, and the practical emphasis they give to

resolve conflicts in context that is different culturally and environmentally from their origin. Moreover, the interview questions aim to investigate the identity of the Oromo and to see the effects and value of the multicultural environment in the Oromo diaspora, who came from the high context culture from east Africa and live in the very low context culture environment in the Nordic area, as Hall (1981) described the two regions in his cultural context theory in his book entitled *Beyond Culture*. The interview questions were used to obtain the factual information from each informant narratives.

The observation is also made by the researcher to check personally and observe the situation at the actual place where the Oromo diaspora live; to catch the genuine information from the area. Above all, different books, articles, journals, online resources released by the Oromo scholars and some other independent media agents, organization or educational centers, project documents and pamphlets produced by different parties are the tools that the researcher has used in the study.

4.2 Types and Methods of data Analysis

To answer the research questions, I used both primary and secondary data for better information gatherings. The primary data includes information gained from different respondents during the field work and from critical observation of the target groups. The secondary sources of the data include information gained from different documents, journals, government policies, handbooks, internet, from the documents of different sectors at the study areas. Thus, the collected data have been processed by coding, editing, and transcribing the narrative interview for the data analysis.

CHAPTER FIVE

5. FINDINGS AND RESULTS

5.1   The Oromo Diaspora and Oromo Identity in the Multicultural Settings

5.1.1 The Oromo in the Diaspora- Norway

So far I did not find the Oromo diaspora statistics in Norway. However, I found Ethiopian emigrants' background data statistics under the emigration category in Norway dated 1 January 2011. The data collectively present the entire Ethiopian background emigrants in Norway.

Table 1. Persons with Ethiopian background in Norway, statistical data 1 January 2011

Immigration Category		All	Male	Female
The immigrant population		3777	1889	1888
Principal applicants	Asylum seekers[18]	2037		
	Resettlement refugee[19]	593		
	others	2		
	Unspecified	116		
	total	1029		
By family connection to principal applicant	Family reunification and accompanying person	721		
	Marriage establishment	308		
	unspecified	-		
Citizenship	Norway	2018		
	Foreign	1759		

Source: http://www.ssb.no/flyktninger_en/

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[18] The definition "Asylum seekers" refers to asylum cases or residence on humanitarian grounds.

[19] Refugees are those who are permitted to come to Norway following an organized selection, normally in conjunction with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). In accordance with a proposal from the government, the parliament sets an annual quota for the number of resettlement refugees to be received by Norway.

The statistics above do not separately present the emigrants from Ethiopia in several groups; for instance by ethnicity. It is the only general information of the emigrants from Ethiopian background. My study focus is not to entire Ethiopian background diaspora; it is only on the Oromo diaspora, but specific data on Oromo is not available.

5.1.2   How does one become a diaspora?

All of my informants have the same reason for becoming part of the diaspora. They blame the forceful pressure from the Ethiopian empire state; and point fingers at the government, and the EPRDF[20], the totalitarian regime. One of my informants whom I name (A) expresses reasons that force him to flee from his country and become diaspora in the following ways:

> *"I was a government employee. And, by my profession I used to teach my people to enhance their awareness on social and economic matters. But, the government was against the awareness raising I was campaigning through arts and literatures to my community. Thus, the wayane[21] cadres sent me to jail for long time. They tortured me. After all, the losses of freedom of speech, extreme tortures and inhumane measures that the current Ethiopian regime is taking on the Oromos made me to be a refuge for many years in the neighboring countries, in Kenya. Finally, the UNHCR[22] resettled me here in Norway".*

As to all informants, the denials to exercise the right on *Oromummaa (*the Oromoness) oblige them to flee from their Oromo country. They all have passed through the same line and become a refugee. All of them have been politically active. Apparently, all of them also claim the freedom of Oromia. They all have necessitated more to freely exercise the Oromo culture, the Oromo language and arts in the Ethiopia limitlessly. However, the Ethiopian government did not provide them with the full right to do so. Instead, the government imprisons and tortures the people who work in art and literature, and most Oromo political activists. The above informant's claim is similar to the other informants. He claims the absence of freedom in the country as a potential cause to leave his country, to quit his regular job and flee to the neighboring country to

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[20] EPRDF Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front
[21] Wayane it is the Tigray people front Party (TPLF) that highly dominated the EPRDF (Ethiopian People revolutionary Front)
[22] UNHCR (United Nations High Commission for Refugees)

seek a safe environment, at least to escape intimidation and torture. In a similar context, Negera, K (2002: 73) reflected in his thesis on Oromo identity and forced migration and referring to his informants, "according to them it has been oppression of what is called 'Colonialism' that hampers them not to live peacefully and use their resources and professions appropriately", which my respondents also claim in similar concepts.

All of the respondents, while they begin expressing themselves, all of them started by saying "*I left Oromia, my country, due to the brutality happened on me and my fellow brothers and sisters.*" Their tone even sounds a claim of a country although the name Oromia country is yet unrecognized by the United Nations. Their claim on the Oromo country concept implies the colonial phenomenon similar to the Kebebew's informants. In all, it shows the respondents strong demand for the future Oromian state, the Oromo country in the world map.

Informant (B) explained reasons that made him part of diaspora in a very similar concept with the other informants by saying:

> "*I fought back to resist for what my mind did not accept, at least in a democratic way as I understood, but, I could not withstand the bold pressure from the armed gangsters. …Actually I did what any human being does to survive. It is really hard to describe the challenging moments I had passed with the brutal regime. The notorious Wayane cadres play a game on a human life. I think (Pause)…. for them it seems like they may play with a doll in the prison house. Many innocent Oromos have been killed that way (pause). Many have been gunned down as well. Thus, to keep myself alive I fled to the neighboring country, to Kenya. And, I was admitted to the UNHCR shelter in Kenya. Finally the UNHCR resettled me here in the third country; Norway. Of course, currently I personally have relief from the brutal regime; but, my fellow brothers and sisters are on my foot. To be sure about this talking to most Oromo nationalists and visiting prisoners in Ethiopia is a simple proof.*"

The informant above expresses the notorious situation of the EPRDF military regime in the country by comparing with the armed gangsters that viciously kill people or loot the resources; for the sake of their own benefits. This gives a clue that how the government cadres and the military are outrageously containing the voices of the citizens. They make the citizens voiceless in their own country. Additionally, he states his fear for his fellow brothers and sister in his country although he does not have any more fear for his personal security as long as he thinks he is in a safe environment. He also expresses

sensitively how he worries about his people back home in *Oromia* to the country he claims utmost.

In connection to being a diaspora, the informants have also gained some experiences in exile. For instance, the informant (A) expresses how he became disapora and has gained some experiences so far in exile in the following ways:

> *"Ani nama mataafi luktile arriiti"; loosely translated, I am a man that is grey in head and leg. I mean, I have gained ample experience in life. Life thought me a lot. My long journey in different countries is my accumulated knowledge. The greyness does not only represent my hair. It represents all my parts. But, I refer it to my head and legs. My head is a center of my body where my mind operates; it is my central processor that manages everything I do. My legs were the moving machine that took me to various parts of the world. I was in different parts of the world, and I experienced a variety of human cultures in different places. Thus, I am part of the Asian, the African and the Western cultures as well."*

The informant expresses the colossal and impressive experiences he has accumulated in exile by symbolizing it as greyness. He refers the greyness even to his body part that does not have grey hair. He has used the greyness as a means to express the rich experiences he has gained so far. It seems it is one of the ways that he constructs his identities and classifies his positions in the diaspora. It also entails how he perceives his current personality through travels he has made to different parts of the world; to Asia, Africa and Europe. Of course, the long journey was not always so voluntarily. It was not also the order of his mind to go somewhere; rather his legs brought him to different parts of the world; at a time he strives for life. His position speaks of how he involuntarily leaves his country and suddenly became a refugee and part of the other cultures in exile.

5.1.3 Multicultural events

In the homogenous culture, various cultural practices are rarely found; most duties are the same. There is nothing strange. The strange experience comes when someone moves from his original places to a very different area opposite to the culture he/she has experienced well. Of course, it is a fact that arriving to the new environment for the

first time is full of strangeness. However, as a human being, there are always ways to overcome them. For instances, my respondents have had a variety of strange experiences on their very first arrivals to the new culture. I selected some of the strange experiences from the informant A and B for this analysis. In fact, the story told by C, a, b and c have also similar concepts. But, to avoid redundancy, I prefer to present only the two of the informants view.

Informant A,

> *"When I arrived here, I was new for everything. Since my very first arrival and onwards, I came across many strange things continuously that I have never seen earlier. Of course, during my very first time everything was different to me including the weather. I grew up in a tied culture. What I saw here was very opposite. We call neighbors and drink coffee together; but, neither here. We live in collective ways; it is none here. In my tradition it is the responsibility of a son or a daughter to assist his/her old families. That does not work here. They rarely visit each other. We do it regularly, at least four or five times in a month. Of course, the system and the traditions are quite different from mine. Individualism is prioritized than collectivism. For a while, all these were a headache questions for me. I was arguing with myself whether I perfectly adapt these cultures or not. In fact, today, these questions are not anymore my headache. I think I am also developing that sense of western cultures or traditions. These days, I myself rarely meet friends; only on some unique occasions; probably during holidays. I am also becoming the center counter of individualism philosophy. Of course, when you live in common with the variety of societies, there is a high probability to share many things commonly with the people around you. Knowingly or unknowingly you develop the cultural values of your areas. Thus, I happily welcomed this culture to my life; I think only what goes with my own way of life philosophy. Now, most of the things which I considered strange are becoming part of my life; and I am also part of them. I respect that part. Moreover, I speak the Norwegian language. I respect the rules and regulation of the country, and I like their tradition as well. Besides my own cultural settings, the others traditions are developing within me. For instance, I usually participate on more of the social gatherings that my surrounding communities organize. In addition to participating on the Norwegian traditions, I also do participate on the other countries diaspora social gatherings, since we share the same setting and commonly live as a diaspora in this country."*

The informant above argues on the challenges that he came across on his very first arrival to Norway. He was noticeably reflecting on everything he saw by arguing with himself whether he adapts to the new cultural setting or not in the new country. Of course, he also totally missed the social gatherings which he experienced at back home.

Moreover, which were part of his life: like coffee ceremony and assisting elders especially the families (father and mother), when they get old and unable to care for themselves. In all, he came to a country that has different social makeup than his original place at where he has grown up, including the weather conditions. Apparently, he was arguing with himself raising many questions. It was also a surprising moment for him to see how rarely family members visit each other. The entire narrative implies that the informant has had some kinds of feelings that indicate a difference in cultural and traditional frameworks. Hence, initially he justifies a lot of dissimilar cultural and traditional practices. In the meantime, at some detour he accepts the existing phenomenon. Therefore, he started working to integrate himself even though he initially assumes that he came to a different culture. Then building a new identity in the new cultural framework follows to appear in his day to day activities.

Indeed, culture tends to be integrated its members and tries to appear consistently with certain premises, values or goals which give it a unity. Example: If there is a festival, everyone celebrates, irrespective of their caste or religion, thus integrating people of different castes and religions together (Rai, et.al 2010). Thus, through times the informant has also identified himself as part of the new community, and he started regularly doing what was very strange to him by making himself part of the community. It also seems a shift from a single identity stereotype that he had to a multiple identity structure. After adapting a lot of traditional and cultural practices of the new environment, the strange parts that he has experienced at his very first arrival become volatile. He becomes an active participant on various social gatherings of the other diaspora communities and the host country's as well.

Informant B,

> *"At the very first time I arrived here, most things were shocking for me. emmm….you know…. I grew up in the southern part of Oromia in the small farmers' village. We rarely have access to electronic Medias; especially for the television; we get chances to watch TV only when we go to the town or cities. In the villages of my country, TV is unthinkable; it is only radio that may be accessible in the hands of a few. So, I had no access to watch movies to experience a little about the western cultures. However, I realized after I came*

here as some cultural reflections are also on movies as well; for instance the relationships. The relationships between men and women are very limited in my country. In fact, it is not completely none, but not opens. If a young man and girl need relationships they have to make through traditions, and families have to bless them. Therefore, the relationship, I mean the sex relationship (a little smile).... is very close. It is a kind of scary..... When a young girl is seen with a young boy kissing each other's, the punishment is dreadful. You know, I grew up under such command. ....emmm ......thus, on my very first arrival, I didn't believe my eyes. I could not have even get courage to see it properly. Such habit is truly shame in my culture. Surprisingly, I could not also control my eyes for not to see it; because it is very new and I have never seen public kissing before. Anyways, latter I managed it. The other thing is how people dressed in public. The miniskirt and other ways of dressing that expose the body are uncommon in my culture. ..... emmm additionally, eating and drinking on the street and in the classrooms. A teacher can drink coffee in the class and a student does too; which is impossible to think in my country.(pause).......You know, I was always arguing with myself saying why not they eat at home? Of course, all these things are not anymore strange to me. I adapted them. Currently I am part of them. I eat and drink on my way to home or to work and in the classes when necessary. Now, I guess I am reflecting some of the new traditions which are not common in my culture, which makes me real multiculturalists. Multiculturalism is multi traditions. I personally participate on most of cultural events here in Oslo. I like it. Actually, here, you cannot say everything is open and everything is also closed. There are people who welcome you and appreciate your tradition and cultures. Rarely there are also very few people who closed their doors and never want to see your culture and traditions. Of course, am not among those people. I always try all the best I can to teach them the equality all traditions. But, the differences appear on how we perform and personally define it."

The above narration indicates that there is always a change. There is no static thing in this world. Thus, the informant's situation clearly signifies the fluid nature of personal identity. For instance, at the very first time his mind did not cope with what he had seen on his very first arrival, and he was strongly arguing with himself. It was a challenging moments to him. He did not even accept eating and drinking in the classrooms as well. When others do, it badly annoys him. However, time also made him to be part of the new traditions/culture. It indicates the shift of an identity from certain steps to the other steps unconditionally. These days, he is part of it. He eats and drinks in the classrooms, on his way to the work place or on a street when necessary. Finally, the strangeness disappeared by reforming oneself, more specifically by adding new identities to a self through adaptation of the environment.

5.1.4 Multiculturalism vs. Assimilation

Respondent (b) states his views on multiculturalism and assimilations in the following ways:

> *"As a citizen, I appreciate all cultures in Norway. Norway is a democratic country that appreciates any cultural practices. As to me having divergent culture is a beauty. And that beauty is a unity. That is how I see it. Culture is a means of incoming when it is preserved and ample protection is given to it. I guess it could be a means to attract a number of tourists to the country as well if we preserve and respect any kinds of cultural practices in the country. For instance, I love to see any cultural group performances. I love to participate on any ceremonies held in my surroundings that concerned me. Indeed, I always actively participate on different ceremonies prepared by my work colleagues as well. Cultural difference does not affect anyone. It is just a means of differentiating who is who. When I say this, am not giving stereotype for specific group, am just saying how culturally someone express him/herself."*

The informant view indicates that there are beneficial parts of the divergent culture in a country. He believes the variety of cultures as one way of expressing the beauties of a certain country, and entails that the cultural differences as an embellishment of certain living areas. Adding to the points, he also emphasizes as culture could be a means of incoming when ample care and attention have been provided to all uniformly. The informant's justification focuses on appreciating the variety of cultural values in the multicultural frameworks. On the contrary, the respondent has different views on assimilation. He does not appreciate the assimilation policy. For that matter, he points out more of the drawbacks than merits concerning assimilation, and explains his argumentative narrations as follow:

> *"When I see the case of assimilation…. actually it depends on how a person personally observes it. But, as to me, more of its drawback is high than its advantages. If I am in favor assimilating, I would not forcibly leave my country. You can pretend to be anyone; but you cannot be anyone at all. You are always just who you are. Even if you tried there would be many faults that you would make. I am sure you would not have also total acceptances from the others whom you would pretend to be. Thus, as to me it is better just to be who you are! Being and pretending to be something else are two different things."*

In the above concepts, there are some intriguing views which the respondent gives for himself. First, it seems he is unwilling to be part of the assimilation. Then, he links his views by a doubt that he may not be accepted by the others; either due to his inability to

assimilate himself or due to faults he may unknowingly make regarding the strange customs or norms. It also depicts his fear of being in danger when he makes mistakes into daily activities. Thus, he develops fears for not to be perceived as a stranger in the communities. On the other hand, it also seems his *Oromoness* in the Oromo political concept, which is still in his heart, is affecting him on the total concept of assimilation. He states, "*If I would appreciate assimilation, I would not forcibly leave my country.*" It implies that, he fought for who he is to reflect his *Oromoness* where he was. Therefore, he still prefers to remain in the Oromo culture even if he is in the different environment only by appreciating the cultural values of the others around him. On top of this, he has developed his own strong philosophy of being himself rather than pretending to be somebody else than he could be.

The respondent (C) expresses his views on multiculturalism and assimilation by citing an Oromo proverb:

> "*Arbi biyya oole fakkaata, garuu Arbbummaan isaa hinhafuu jedha Oromoon*". *Ostensibly translated, "the Oromo proverb says, an elephant pretend to be where he stays/resides, but remains an Elephant." To clarify, various reasons made most people diaspora in different countries. I love this country, the people and culture. Now, the culture is my culture. My acceptance to this culture is affirmed since the day I arrived here. I speak the language; and I actively participate in every social events. Today, both cultures represent me. I mean my culture and the cultures I am living in. (pause).....emmmm .... In fact, I have my own culture; which become refugee with me for long time. And, I have to remain within the domain of Oromo culture and Oromo identity frameworks. Moreover, I also have to teach my culture the generation to come in order to give them their original faculty that describes them. I hope doing so will also reduce the identity confusion that may rise among the youngsters. Nobody can be anybody else. Therefore, as to me the drawbacks of assimilation is countless than its merits. It's my strong belief to remain self than to be somebody else which cannot be possible in reality.*"

This informant also shares some of the similar concepts with the previous informant. He considers pretending to be somebody else as an impossible phenomenon, and explains his reasons through the Oromo proverb. The proverb implies to whatever extent someone tries to act like somebody else, no one could be the exact copy of someone else. At any cost one should remain true to him or herself. The respondent also shares similar fears with the other respondents that not to be perceived as a stranger by the host

country communities. In fact, the fear comes from the immense worries of not to make mistakes or not to do things differently in the communities.

On the other hand, the informant also claims both cultures which seem a complex identity negotiation of the diaspora that portrays multiple identity reflection as well. In a converse concept, he still wishes to keep the youngsters within the Oromo identity domain in which he perceives to be the right way for the children, while he himself claims both cultures. Indeed, this could be a terrible situation for the children who have grown up in a different environment outside the Oromo traditional framework, and do not have shared ample Oromo cultural experiences with the Oromo communities efficiently.

The third respondent (A) states his views by saying:

> "*Cultural assimilation is the worst one. Its demerits are a lot more than its merits. I respect the rule and regulation of this country. I keep all my responsibilities and do everything I can for this country. Apart from this, I do not like to be totally assimilated and change my identity. My culture is my own origin which represents me to this globe. I was born an Oromo and I will remain an Oromo. I am happy to remain just who am I. I think that is the natural right and no one has a right to change it; even me. My right to change is limited only to very few things which may appear on papers. But, I cannot change my Oromoness, my blood through assimilation. Complete assimilation is not my type. To sustain my culture, I will teach my kids in any possible ways I can. Even if I cannot show them practically, I will teach them theoretically.*"

In comparison with the other respondents, this informant has exceptionally strong resistance to assimilation. The informant is the one who expresses his rich experiences in exile more than any of the other respondents. Of course, in his interview, he did not tell us deeply of all the experiences he accumulated apart from stating his mature life experiences by referring to his body parts. He was in Asia, Africa in the neighboring country and recently in Europe. Intensely he is proud of the experiences he accumulated so far whether obstinate or convenient. However, on this part, he strongly denounces the assimilation. He did not label himself to a single culture. He was a simple traveler. He narrates what he has observed on assimilation portfolio, and from what he has personally experienced in his life journey. To validate his argument, he told the real story (which he claims) that happened on one of his friend's family, and says, "*I do not*

want to repeat the same mistakes that my friend does." Mr. Bonsam (pseudonym) is one of his family's friends.

Mr Bonsam families are in favor of the assimilation. They would not teach any cultural practices of their origin to their kids. They had a practical intention of making their kids all Europeanized. Thus, the kids had not get any clue about what cultural backgrounds of their families had. After some years, an unexpected shock happened to the families at a time they went to Africa, to their original home, where their ancestors live.

> *"After very long time stay, Mr Bonsam went to Africa for a visit. He is married and has three kids. All of them were born in Europe. They have never been in Africa and had no clue about their families' cultural backgrounds. Visit to Africa was the very first experience for them. In the Oromo culture, for the respected guest or someone who come home after a long time, the families slay a sheep or a bull for the honor. Such practice is also considered as a means of integration with the new family members and the communities. According to the custom of the society, most slays are performed on the spot at where the guests found for the honor and for especial traditional ritual ceremonies. When the time approached, to start the ceremony, all the families and the guests were called to a place the sheep was tied. The situation was a bit confusing for those strange kids. So far they were not aware about what is going to happen until a kid asked his father watching big knifes on the hands of the butcher. The father softly answered him; saying "they are going to slay this sheep for the honor of us." The kids were shocked and at some point they all say "what?" Again a kid asked his father saying "papa, you mean this sheep?" The father answered by saying "yes!" Then, the kids shout!! They spoke their disagreement to the situation. They all said "Naiiiii…" At the same time the father was trying to persuade them on the matter, but he could not. They all shout! "Nai! Nai!" were there words. They tried to rescue the sheep; although they could not succeed. But, they remain resisting not to eat the meat. You see, the strange happened in the community? My community prefers anyone to be oneself. Pretending to be somebody is not appreciated. Therefore, I do not want to create a similar story again. I will not let my families for the total assimilation. I will remain who I am. But, enrich myself by both cultures. Both cultures represent me. Emmmm,,, anyways, total assimilation is not my type."*

In the above narration, the story tells the fact that happened to the respondent's family friend while they were in Africa. The children were limited to only a single European environment by the perception of making kids the real Europeans, although the real cultural backgrounds of their family is quite different from the Western. Of course, the fear of the respondent is similar to that of most people in the multicultural

environments. In fact, in the multicultural environment, making the generation multicultural is far better than forced assimilation; to which someone cannot represent in reality.

5.2 Identity in the multicultural framework

In this discussion, the focus is on the Oromo diaspora identity in Norway along with their living environment and their earlier identities based on the guidelines I have made during data collection in the field. The entire analysis focuses on how the Oromo diaspora define identities and what conceptual frame they have for personal, ethnic or national identities as a people who belong here and there (Yeoh and Huang, 2000). Therefore, I classify the cases of each informant's conceptual frame toward identities and more to investigate what kinds of identities they have or have developed so far in the new environments. I also selectively present some of the interviewee concepts in order to minimize the redundancy of ideas.

5.2.1 Defining self-identities in the multicultural setting

Informant (A) defines identity for himself in the following way:

> "I can see myself in various ways on identity matters. Of course, I can say many points to classify my personal, political and ethnic identities philosophies. I define identity in relation to my duties, which actually indicates my personal view. I mean focusing on points that only refers me. I can tell you from the general toward the specific that goes only directly to me and only me. In the first place, I am a man (Human). This is my typical identity that differentiates me from the other living beings and also unites me with humans. As a human, I am black originally from the African continent, specifically from the East Africa, the Oromo country. And, ethnically I am an Oromo ....."

Apparently the respondent also states how he define his *Oromoness* starting from the broad general name Oromo to the specific location to where he was born counting back to the seventh blood origins of his family tree (Oromo, ...clan,....sub clans....lineages and to specific list divisions of the communities). To strengthen his views on such identity claims he mentions some very specific distinctiveness or behaviors. For instance, he indicates by saying "*I share some of my grandfather's behavior on certain management, even on home management. This resembles me with my ancestors. Additionally, as any Oromo and the Oromo man, I share the struggle for the Oromian freedom although my National Identity is Norwegian.*"

The respondent has mentioned some majorly distinctiveness characters that he has shared with his forefathers to strengthen his claims on identities. For instance, he states

the resemblances of his life philosophy with his grandfather. Adding to the point, he also defines his political identity in relation to the Oromo political struggle for freedom as most Oromo diaspora claim. He mentions his national political boundary identity as a European; specifically referring to the country he is living in: Norway. Above all, the informant claims an identity in multiple ways, in lines to his being a human, by his physical appearances – the blackness, by his geographical origin- from the East Africa, by his national political boundary identities and by his ethnic Oromo identity. To prove this that he is ethnically an Oromo, he elaborates by reasoning the blood origin of his families by counting back to the seventh family origin, which he thinks it speaks his *Oromoness* differently.

Informant 'C' defines the identity concept for himself in the following ways.

> *"I can define identity in relation to my profession, job, ethnic, race, nationality and political philosophy. For instance, "Ani Nama gurraacha"; in English translation it means, 'I am a black man' from the Oromo nation, Oromo country. My Oromoness is the natural gift and no one denies and changes that; even me. You know…. If you count back to my ancestors, the bold Oromo names are on the top. I am proud of that. In the Oromo nation I am from…..*

Then he states his typical clan/tribal and lineage, then back to his family tree and counts ahead by following many steps till he reaches the big tribe name of his ancestors.

Similar to the other informants, the above informant has also mentioned blackness to his typical identity reflections by saying "*ani nama gurraacha*"; which means "I am a black man" that indicates his race, a black man from African continent. It seems blackness is also another ways of creating self-identity in the diaspora, especially in the Western countries. Of course, if it is in Africa, blackness would probably not be an issue. There is no stereotype regarding to the blackness; because, almost everyone in Africa is black. Furthermore, he defines his identities in relation to his profession as well.

In general, the respondent identity construction makeup holds multiple identities. Thus, for his identity claims he states some reasonable doubts. For example, how he is ethnically an Oromo. To assure that claims he talks from his family trees by counting

many names ahead expressing the lineage and sub clans till he reaches to his big tribe name. He has used the family tree method to identify himself to where he belongs in the Oromo nation, and to which clan his family tree belongs; above all to present his ethnic Oromo identity claims by evidences. It seems such ways of sticking on blood origin and counting back by focusing on linage and clans are also some kind of identity negotiations in exile.

5.2.2   Experiencing new identities in the multicultural setting

For this data analysis, all of the informants have responded in a similar context that they are currently experiencing new cultures, which is adding new identities for them. Of course, it is not any more the culture of the others; they are living in it and they are also claiming as it is their own culture, which is one part of their life. For example, informant (C) states some of the typical examples which were not part of his life, nevertheless currently it becomes his regular life. He had never eaten and drunken while walking on a street. These days, all these are become most of his daily life. He buys a coffee from a side shop and drinks on the street; on his way to school or to work. Similarly, he has never celebrated Christmas before coming to Europe. He follows the Oromo traditional religion-'*Waaqeffanna*'. Currently, he celebrates Christmas. By similar concepts, the other respondents have also agreed on some new cultural constructions to their daily life along with their own culture that adds additional personal identities. They liked the variety of cultural experiences they have gained so far that gave them multiple identities.

5.2.3   Identity reflection through language in the multicultural framework

All of the informants have strong views on connection between language and identity. They have a very remarkable love for their language- the *Afaan Oromo (*The Oromo Language*)*. They believe that *Afaan* Oromo is the media that interconnects them to their Oromoness.

Informant b, states how he reflects his identity through language in the following ways:

> *"Afaan Oromo is my language that typically speaks who I am and to which families I belong; especially in the ethnical concept. Actually, it is hard to believe or to say that everyone who speaks the language is Oromo or ethnically an Oromo. .....to me, the language and the people are all the same; but different sides of the coin. <u>The Oromo people and the Oromo language have been suppressed by the Ethiopian empire state for many years. The dominance of a single language in the country kicks off my language from the media, education and the other things that language may speaks about. However, my forefathers strived more to maintain the language and cultures a lot. They have taught us histories and stories through it. Thus, preserving the language is a way of maintaining Oromoness.</u> In my family we always communicate in Afaan Oromo. My kids, when they came to this country, they were about 6 and 8 years old. They have learnt more vocabularies back home. Thus, they have no difficulties to communicate in Afaan Oromo. They can speak perfectly as any Oromo does in the Oromo country. And, I am happy for that. Of course, I personally encourage them a lot and am very serious on language matters. I teach my children the language skills specially the speaking and writing. To me, I think Afaan Oromo reflects my Oromoness more. ..... We (the families) do speak the language of this country, and we are the citizens of this country as well. However, the host country's language does not represent my ethnic identity; rather it classifies only my national political boundary identity, as it was part of the question for citizenships request. ...... You can be a nationality of certain country whatever language you may speak. That is the civic right. Of course, the language you speak also does not specify your ethnic group. But, to me as an Oromo and Oromo speaker it specifies me. My language goes with my ethnic identity, and it is quite different from the national political boundary identity I have."*

The respondent states his views on the language and identity through the Oromo political sense emphasizing on how the Oromo language has been suppressed by the Ethiopian empire state parallel to the Oromo people, who speak the language. The respondent links his political views with language as well. He emphasizes on balancing the people and the language by relating to the Ethiopian politics as both are victims of the tyrants. Apart from this, he states how the Oromo language speaks about him, tells who he is and how represents him as an Oromo ethnic identity to the globe. ""Identity" refers to the pattern of meaning by which we structure our lives. In a social sense, it is a relative construct (Salomone, et.al 2010: 69)." Indeed, the respondent explanation also follows certain patterns for an identity construction in relation to the Oromo political cases. In general, he clearly indicates the effects and the role of language on identity

constructions. Identity develops through distinguishing a self-concept as a person and a social animal in relation to the others. It tells us "who we are, where we're coming from (Daniel Pipes, 2007)". An identity is fluid and its construction process requires various cases. It could also create a forge identity as well. Thus, due to various reasons, the process of forging an identity is also filled with contradictions (Salomone, et.al 2010: 69). As to the respondent above, speaking the Oromo language as the mother tongue is the other simple way of expressing a self. Of course, he also mentions that all who speak the language could not also be identified as an Oromo. However, for him as an Oromo and Oromo speaker, he strongly classifies his identity in connection to the Oromo language. Thus, he develops strong beliefs on devotedly teaching his children the Oromo language both speaking and writing skills. At last, he justifies stimulating negotiations of the language, nationalities and ethnicities to himself.

Informant (C) reflects his views how language plays an identity role in the following way:

> *"My kids clearly understand me. They perfectly do whenever I tell them to do something. They can take orders. But, they cannot perfectly articulate Oromo words. They prefer if I always talk to them by Norwegian language. However, I mostly resist them. You know why? (Pause) actually before I moved to this place, they had chances to learn the Oromo language in schools here in Norway. You know…. some regional areas appreciate teaching of the other diasporas culture and language in the schools. It is really a real multicultural environment. However, since I moved to this place my kids lost that chance. Actually the Oslo area does not favor that system. That is why, I highly encourage them to learn the Oromo language at home in addition to the other languages they learn in the school. I do not stop teaching them. In fact, currently they are placing the necessary efforts to learn the language; which is very promising for the future. They are constructing sentences using funny beautiful order. It's my hope that they will speak one day. You know….as to me, teaching the language of the families' would give ample clues to the kids; about their origin, their cultures, who they are and provide answers for the ethnic identity question which might come later. Therefore, language is one way to get responses for the questions may come later and it is one way of reflecting self-identity."*

The respondent considers all possible ways to teach the Oromo language to his kids though he has not totally succeeded as to his best demands. However, his hope

continues as usual though his children do not perfectly speak the Oromo language. Mostly, they have responded to him by the host country's language. Indeed, this seems to be a quite normal phenomenon of the multicultural framework. The respondent did not also lose hope to teach them again and again the Oromo language. He continues to make the children the Oromo speakers. Thus, he is exerting all his efforts as much as he can to see some reliable changes on them. It seems he is too eager to comprehend changes in them swiftly, especially on the *Oromoness* through language reflection although there may be some defies which he may not easily overcome in exile. It seems he is a bit emotional for that as well. It might also be impossible to make the children easily to be totally in the Oromo identity domain especially in the multicultural framework. His view also indicates how he is poignant for the fact that he does not have any community school in his area to teach his children the Oromo language. He states the problem of not having the community school as one of the reasons that hinders his dream of making his children the Oromo speakers.

5.2.4 Performing an Oromo identity in everyday life in exile

Among few individuals in diaspora, still there are nonstop efforts to maintain their traditions. For instance, teaching traditional games to children are some ways of the identity approach that reflects the *Oromoness* in exile. The following is one of the typical examples that I have observed. I saw such kinds of initiations in one of my informants' house while I was there for an interview. He plays the Oromo traditional game "*Takkooyyee, Lammooyyee…….*" with his daughter; that he used to play while he was a kid; and, I also used to play with my peer groups while I was a child. However, in the new environment, the game itself appears in a new version.

> *"The 'takkooyyee lamooyyee' game is naturally played by putting all peers' hands together in the circle form. Then, a leader who is selected by the peer group starts leading the game by saying "Takkooyyee, lamooyyee, lamraan…." He simultaneously says each word by touching the peer's hand palm. And, a peer will be released from the circle turn by turn when the naming of the game is finished on his/her hand palm. The last person on whom the game naming finished will be a person who defies the others to catch every one of his peer group running after them and to put under his/her custody. The*

first person whom he/she defies and catches will help him/her to catch the others. Catching the entire peer group continues in a similar way. The last person who is not caught by the peer group is declared to be a winner; then he will take the responsibility of leading the game."

The game defines how some individuals in the diaspora are still trying to maintain their *Oromoness* in their daily life. Unfortunate enough, the place where the father and the daughter had been playing was not suitable for the game; it was in the house. At normal circumstances, the *takkoyyee lamooyyee* game is not played in the house; rather it is in the field, where the kids run to the fullest of their need freely. However, the father told that as he simply uses the gaming method just for ordinary initiation to practice some typical Oromo identities and to assist the children to easily learn the Oromo language speaking skill.

Apart from this, it is also observed that some of the informants are trying to make their places the same as in their homeland. Most specifically, the same as their birth place by making the physical setup of their houses similar to the homeland by embellishing their house walls by the traditional Oromo antiquities.

5.3   Conflict Management Strategies among the Oromo in Diaspora

The discussion in the literature part shows conflict is not necessarily entailing violence. It could be constructive or destructive. To minimize the destructiveness rates, the societies use various ways to arbitrate a conflict, could be by the traditional ways or by the state law. Traditional ways could be the institutionalized ways of handling conflicts like in the cases of the Oromo *Jaarsumma* system. Institutionalized in the sense of habituated ways of doing things, as understood, e.g. by Schutz and Luckmann (1973)[23]. Other ways of handling conflict would also be institutionalized, but they would be conducted within a legal system which adds, of course, another dimension that may include another version that has a unique structure and procedures from the habituated ways within the societies.

All of the Oromo tribes have mostly used the traditional conflict management mechanisms *Jaarsummaa,* to arbitrate the conflicts in the communities. The *Jaarsumma* council has full-fledged authority to solve even the deep-rooted conflicts on resources and broader conflicts in the traditional ways. However, for the purpose of this study, the *Jaarsumma* discussion focuses only on the nonviolent conflict in the intercommunity or interpersonal communication in the diaspora.

The *Jaarsummaa* process passes through different strategies for peace building and to create harmony within the communities. The system is a self-sufficient and has unique ways of handling and processing cases. There might be slight differences on processing from location to location due to environmental effects and the diversified ethnic groups living conditions from tribe to tribe. The term and the goal are all the same for all Oromo communities; it is for peace building, and to encourage social life in the communities. For the purpose of this study, how the Oromo analyzes the cases of the conflicted individuals/parties, I discuss the *Arsi* Oromo *Jaarsummaa* systems due to more of my informants are from the *Arsi* Oromo.

Discussions on handling of the cases in the Oromo *jaarsummaa* and short description of the Oromo *jaarsummaa* systems are the results of the transcriptions from the informants.

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[23] See 'The Structures of the Life-world.' By Schutz, A. & Luckmann, T. (1973).

5.3.1 Handling the cases in the Oromo *Jaarsummaa* (Conflict management/resolution)

In the Oromo *Jaarsummaa* system (a traditional conflict management), the *Jaarsa biyya* do not call for the *jaarsumma* process immediately just because they have only heard complaints from the conflicted individuals. Rather, *jaarsa biyya* critically examine the cases before hand and before deciding to take to the *jaarsumma* council. Then, the *Jaarasa biyyaa* categorize the cases into two ways for better investigation. These are: into (*Dubbii himannaa geettuufi dubbii himannaa hingeenne ykn jilba hingeenne*) literally translated, first, into a case that necessarily needs elders for resolution, and second, into a case that does not necessarily need the elders role; that could be solved by the conflicted individual self-negotiations. *Jaarsa biyyaa* critically evaluates each case focusing on the following points: Is the case extremely serious? Does the case certainly need *jaarsaa biyya* (elders of council)? Could the case be solved without the *jaarsa biyya* involvement? In a similar way, some other points have also risen for better decisive analysis to find better solutions for the conflicted individuals/parties. After *jaarsa biyyaa* inspect all cases, they decide on what to do next. If the case is truly serious and badly needs the elders' council, the processes follows the *Jaarsummaa.*

In the *Jaarsummaa* system, the cases of the conflicts individuals or groups will have addressed to the *Jaarsa biyyaa* (elders' council/elders of the country) in various ways. First, among the conflicted individuals, the one may take the case to *Jaarsa biyyaa*. This seems to accuse the other disputant to the elders' of the council. Otherwise, both of the conflicted individuals could have also taken the cases to the *Jaarsa biyyaa* on their part. Apart from this, the cases could have also been addressed to the *Jaarsa biyya* if the one side of the conflicted individual may have feel him/herself as a wrong doer or knew that he/she has committed wrong deeds on one of his/her friends. Then, he or she may go to the *Jaarsa biyya* and asks them to reconcile him with his/her friend/s. He/she may say, "I hurt him/her unknowingly; so, please reconcile me with him/her. I will pay compensation if necessary for all my faults". Apart from these, sometimes, the *Jaarsa biyya* themselves look after the problems and ask the conflicted individuals/groups for reconciliation. Of course, *Jaarsa biyya* go to both parties and ask them by saying, "Guys, give us your words of agreement, we will handle your problems through our traditions". Apparently, *Jaarsa biyyaa* also persuade both conflicted individuals or

parties and work more on how to calm down their temper. When they get positive responses from both sides, they (the *Jaarsa* team) decide the day to start the *Jaarsummaa* process to fix the problems. In case one of the conflicted individual resists or rejects, the *Jaarsa biyya* request, he or she may face serious punishments according to the norms and customs of the societies. The punishment could be exceptionally serious so that he/she may not withstand it. It could include total alienation from the community and refusing the social services that the other community members deserve.

As the transcribed data indicates, traditionally the Oromo communities live in a collective way of life. Collective ways of living in a sense that where everyone shares many things in common and stands for the same social system. The communal social system made the society to live interdependently. As a result, everyone likes to keep the communal life for various social matters. The situation creates more social ties that help to generate a more peace-loving community. Indeed for most of the community members, the communal life is just for not to be alienated from the social structures. Therefore, when the *Jaarsa biyya* contact the conflicted individuals, responses are almost always positive. Mostly the conflicted individuals do not resist the requests of the *Jaarsa biyyaa*. In fact, some individuals may rebuff the request (Arsie [Pseudonym, the informant). However, they may not escape the consequences that come with the refusal.

Jaarsa biyyaa initiate peace building in the communities. More importantly the elders' teams strongly work on creating more peace loving societies. That is why even the Oromos express the value of *Jaarsa* in the following, "*Jaarsa jiruu qe'een hinbadduu*"; roughly translated, if there is *Jaarsa* (elders) in the community, there is peace.

5.3.2 Short description of the *Jaarsummaa* process

The *Jaarsummaa* council has its own structures and processes that even stipulate the sitting position while analyzing the cases at hand. The sitting position is mostly in a circle form where the *Jaarsa* (elders) possibly see one another face to face. Especially, the facilitators (*Qora*) must have to sit in a face to face position. Always, the oldest

person among the *Jaarsa biyyaa* from the *Jaarsummaa* team opens the case; unless he willingly deploys some other person to open the case on his behalf. The elder may open the cases by proverbs or without proverbs. In the following, I discuss how the *Arsi* Oromo begin the *Jaarsummaa* process in the assembly to arbitrate conflicts as one of the informants, Arsie (Pseudonym) explains.

The Traditional *jaarsummaa* opening procedures

J1: kootaa (come)

J2: dhufee/kootaa (I have come)

J1: maaf battalatti bayee? (Why I have come here?/ Why I have come to the floor?)

J2: waan battalatti baheef. (You asked why I have come here….)

J1: Eeyyen, maaf battalatti bayee? (Yes, why I have come here?)

J2: Sirnatu nabaasee (I have come here for serious issues.)

J1: Sirna santuu maali? (What is that serious issue?)

J2: Waldhaba ebaluuf ebaluuti(maqaa namoota waldhabe)   Mr. X and Mr.Y (by naming the conflicted individuals or groups) have been in a spat for the past few days/weeks (it depends on the length of the conflict); and we are here to reconcile them based on their request.

Here, there may also be different ways of expressing. It depends on how the jaarsummaa council gathers. If the elders' council comes by the call of someone among the conflicted individuals or groups, they could say we are here due to Mr.X calling us to handle the cases between him/her and Mr.Y. Or, if the case comes through the initiation of the elders' council they may say, it is what the elders of the council investigated so far in the community that Mr.X and Mr.Y had been in a long time quarrel and we are here to solve the problems between them. Then, they pass to the next step to seek the confirmation by asking the willingness of every Jaarsa in the Jaarsummaa team in the following ways:

J1: Waldhabbii tana ni laalaa itti siif galuu… itti siif galuu ….itti siif galuu

J1: Do we agree that on investigating these problems? (At least three times; to confirm that everyone agrees on the matters)[24].

J2: Siif gala! (Yes we agree!)

J1: Dhugee yaa'ee nagayaan siif haa galau (May your cattle peacefully drink and back to your yard)

J2. Anaaf sittuu (Same to you too)

After the confirmation, the facilitators *(qora)* start to analyze the cases. They start asking the very first person who brought the case to the *Jaarsumma*. If the case comes to the floor through the initiation of the *Jaarsa biyyaa,* the team considers a person who is a bit calmer and who has less of temper than the other. Probably they may also look after the elder whom they may think can tolerate them for a while.

The *Jaarsaa biyyaa* always asks the conflicted individuals separately. When they have finished listening to the cases of the conflicted individuals, they analyze the case deeply until they find out a common point that is possibly helpful to bring both of the conflicted individuals together for better discussions. If one of the conflicted individuals denies the case, the elders' council asks him/her to bring the witness. The witnesses, before giving their testimony they go under oath in the name of *Waaqaa*[25] (the supernatural power whom they call "*gurraacha garaa garbbaa kan maqaa dhibbaa*"- literally translated the black wise and wide with a hundred names. This implies the unseen divine with a hundred names who can see everything and is immensely powerful. The elders advise the witnesses to give their words smoothly. They also warn

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[24]If there is a complaint from the participants they have to show immediately. If they bring the complains after the jaarsa agreed on the point, technically after three times sayings, the complaints have no value. The jaarsa precede the cases; it is dead and already confirmed.

[25] Waaqa- is a super natural power that is (GOD). It is the traditional Oromo belief/religion. The religion has no any translation concepts from the Christian or Islam. It is a traditional belief among the Oromos before the introduction of Islam and Christianity in to the Oromo land. Even in these days, it has many followers in the Oromo country. Among Oromos, " 'Waqa'(sky/God) is the supreme being that creates all things and is the sources of all life; starting with water and rocks, going on through the vegetable and animal world through man, Waqa has appointed to every being its own place in a cosmic order of which he is also the guardian . Sin is simply a breaking of this cosmic order." Bartels, L. 1983:14

them in case they speak pretexts by saying: *"Waaqa Jala teettee, Lafa gubbaa teettee dhugaa hindabsin";* which means, *do not distort the facts by sitting under God, and sitting on the earth/soil.* This implies that God is the supernatural power who can kill and heal anyone/anything. God can see whatever anyone does, and the earth/soil is also the last destination of all creatures, where anyone's soul lonely lives inside the grave. Therefore, it is just a request and an advice for the witness to consider all facts in mind. It is also a means of encouraging them to speak only what they have seen, by terrorizing them how '*Waaqa*' punish them in case they distort the facts. *Jaarsa biyyaa* also warns the witnesses by indicating some points of what will happen to them when they distort the facts. Especially, the spiritual leaders, warn the witnesses to be very careful, and not to speak pretexts by saying: "*Yoo dhugaa dabsite, dabaa dhalchita, dabaan finnatti galta, kanaafuu waan beettu dhugaa dubbadhu*" Roughly translated, "If you distort the reality, you will give birth to an unblessed child, thus speak the fact and the reality you only know and save your families from being unblessed."

Finally, after hearing the witnesses, the *Jaarsa biyyaa* meticulously evaluate every single event and come to the decision. When they make decisions, first, they call for a person whom they think has made a mistake. Of course, they did not tell him on the spot. They try to calm down his/her temper. They may tell him the decisions through proverbs how they decided. Apparently the person may get some clues from the proverbs on how the decision has finished. In fact, before they tell him/her that he/she has done something wrong, they have persuaded him/her on every matter concerned the problems. Then, if necessary they request him/her to ask for an apology or to pay compensation. After they finish persuading on the matters with a person whom they may think is a wrong doer, they move to the next person whom they consider the gloomier or disconsolate. Similarly, they do not tell what they have decided on the spot. They warm the environment by putting various jokes. They give him/her some advises on the matter.

Finally, they tell the decision they have made by saying, *"We saw every single case; it was not his intention to hurt. Thus, just forgive him and become a family again".*[26] If the compensation is necessary they also tell him/her what they have decided by saying "We decided that he/she has to pay this much (by stating the amount) compensation, please accept us and forgive him too." When they get acceptances from the gloomier, all the elders' council members bless him/her. Then, they pass to the next necessary steps as to the demands of the norm and cultural values of the society. Of course, on some cases some ritual practices are very necessary to validate the *jaarsummaa* process. On the other hand, when he/she refuses to accept the *jarsummaa* decision, he or she faces a serious fine from the *Jaarsa biyya* team. In most cases, as the informant Arsie explains what *Jaarsa biyyaa* decides is mostly acceptable. That is why they even say "*Jaarsi udaan nama nyaachisa*"; which means *Jaarsa biyaa* can even force one to eat feces.

The immense role of the *Jaarsa biyyaa* in the community is to initiate peace and negotiation among the conflicted individuals. They are not exactly the same as to the modern ways of decision makers, like the court judges. In some *jaarsummaa* occasions, to make everything very simple, the *Jaarsa* team even purposely warns both sides of the conflicted parties to create a sense of guiltiness feeling inside them, and as to all consider themselves as they are wrong doers to simplify the cases; especially on the family matters. Then, they advise both of the conflicted individuals separately to ask an excuse. Finally, they call both of them to the same place; then without going to the details, both of them unknowingly take the faults to their side and ask excuses for one another" (Arsie, the informant). On the other hand, when the wrong doer is clearly identified, and he/she has absolutely committed serious mistakes, the *Jaarsa biyyaa*

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[26] *"*It depends on the degree of the conflicts. If the conflict happened unknowingly and hurt the other side of the conflicted individual by 'Seetee*'* (which means a conflict that happened unintentionally and lead the other/s offended or hurt), it could be solved through giving simply an excuse. Most of the time, the societies may address such cases to jaarsa biyyaa only for demanding the truth. They even say "Dhugaan lamaa hinmurtu." which means a true decision decides only for one. I came to you for searching the truth. On such matters a person or a group who gets the real decision the "*dhugaa*" (the truth), mostly they do not demand for serious compensation, if the conflict was unintentional. Nevertheless, if the conflicts happen intentionally, everything is evaluated seriously and the measures are also very serious and could include enormous fines in kind or in cash. Of course, most of the time compensation is a must on such cases" (Arsie, the informant).

may also have taken some serious measures which could take beyond forgiveness that the discontent provides based on the norms and customs of the society.

Figure 3   *Jaarsummaa* sitting positions
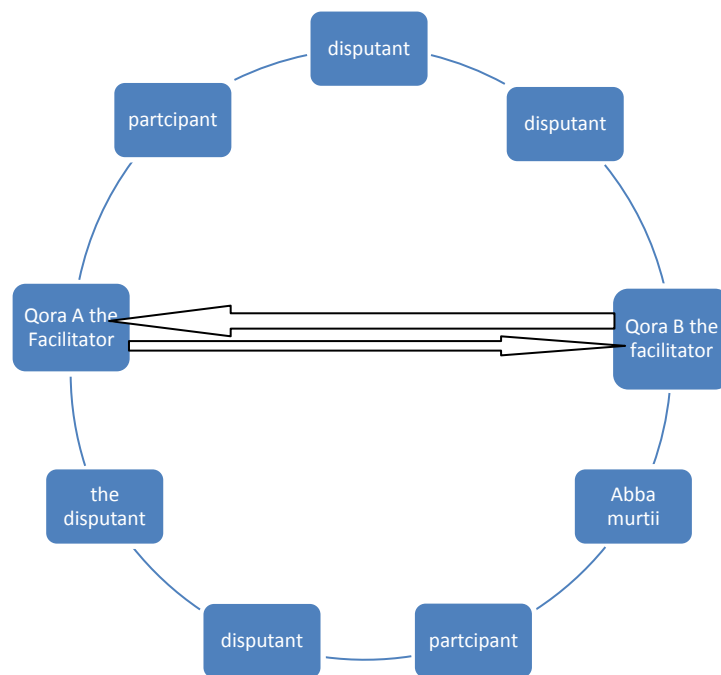
**The participants are bystanders who come to the floor by saying '*gungume*'. The position of Abba halanga(the judge) could be anywhere among the participants.

5.3.3   *Jaarsummaa* in the diaspora community in Norway

Among the informants, four of them have ample experiences on traditional conflict management. The other two had no ample experience, but they had ideas on how to manage conflicts traditionally. They attended in some *Jaarsummaa* cases to learn the processes back home though they did not take part in the handling procedures. Since they came to Norway, they have developed experiences by participating in many events held to manage conflicts through the Oromo tradition.

All of the informants have had a dispute at least once in life with someone due to the variance in ideas/interest. Apparently, all of them have also experienced negotiation. Four of them have done negotiation at least once by themselves while two of them have never made negotiation by themselves; rather a third party negotiates them in the community.

There is an Oromo saying, "*Gadoon takka turaan takka ammo du'aan dhumatti.*" This means, "The quarrel among individuals may have been solved by two ways. Firstly through time; as it takes a long time the quarrel may be forgotten; and secondly, when a person dies." According to informant (c), who is in the age range of 40-45 years, it is not mostly advised to reach that point. The *Jaarsa biyya* in the community handles the cases through the Oromo traditions. He also states how the Oromo community in Norway arbitrates conflicts in the following ways.

> "*Most of us, in the community like to manage conflicts through traditional ways. Of course, in the first place there are no serious conflicts in this country. There may be very few which arises from personal interests. .... You know, it is really challenging to handle everything in a similar ways as to the original Oromo tradition conflict arbitrating systems by taking into account every single part like rituals and some other necessary effects that go hand in hand with conflict management. (Pause....) you know why......the people's philosophy on traditional concepts is not the same as to back home. Here everyone lives alone. Individualism is in its highest peak compared to the back home situations. .... collective way of living is very rare. In the communal life everyone shares what he/she has with the other people and neighbors...... their families live in collective ways of life; they borrow various things from each other's including the spices for foods. Thus, communities love to live in communal ways; and they need to sustain the system forever. Therefore, for some similar reasons the communities in back home strongly advocate the Jaarsummaa system which actually advocates collective ways of living as well. Here, there is no such way of life......, sometimes people even say, no one does anything for me and do nothing on me as well. I live my life. My life does not concern anyone. Thus, concerns to the jaarsummaa are a bit weak.....Of course, it is not also totally vanished. We still try to fix a few community problems through traditional ways. However, it is not strong. To speak frankly, it only seems it appears by name and we are not keeping all steps and procedures as the process demands....it lacks many things that the Jaarsummaa (elders' council) demands. And the ritual processes which may be necessary on some conflict arbitrating system is almost none. But, to handle the cases easily and to make things very simple, and for not to let it go beyond the community levels, we try to solve problems of the community by the traditional way. That is the strong part of our community. This speaks yet we*

are not very far from it; but we are not also stick to it as we do in the Oromo country. In fact, to make similar as to the earlier as we do in the Oromo country, the current living style does not fully allow us."

The informant states that the Oromo in the exile are not very far from the traditional ways of conflict management though they are not stick to it. A number of factors diminish the reliability of *Jaarsummaa* in exile. The respondent points out some of the key factors that lead the system to deteriorate swiftly by taking the diaspora living situation as an example. In fact, it is true that it is very challenging to have the exact system as of the Oromo country in the diaspora. However, there are still great demands among most of the community members to solve conflicts through traditional ways.

The other informant (B), also states his views on how the Oromos arbitrate conflicts in the following ways:

"Conflict is common everywhere: in the family, in the society and among individuals. Actually here in Norway, how to arbitrate conflict depends on the degree of the conflicts. ....mostly, depends on a degree of problems arise in the Oromo community. If the community around can manage it, elders effectively work on it to manage by the traditional way, if not it may follows the country's system. Surprisingly, it is not only the people who become a refugee, the traditions as well. Of course, it is really hard to say that the Jaarsummaa system is on its strong position in exile, especially here in Norway. But, we still respect the system. The disgusting thing is ...emmm...you know.... sometimes it is seen when people jump over the decision made by the jaarsa biyyaa. I think it is a kind of complicated situation. Most people say we love jaarsummaa.... jaarsummaa.... But, in reality, it is difficult to change the decisions made by jaarsa into practice. It is stumpy; and it is not respected. It seems it is alive; but not seen in reality. Of course, it is not also totally vanished."

Conflict handling mechanisms vary from the community to the community and from individuals to individuals. The informant indicates that a conflict handling mechanisms depends on how the person sees things or reacts to it. Some may prefer to solve their problems through traditional ways by '*Jaarsummaa*' while others prefer to the state system to follow the rules and regulation of the country.

Indeed, the degree of a conflict determines the possibility of taking to the court or arbitrating in the hands of the community's elderly people. He points out the weakness of the Oromo *Jaarsummaa* system in exile by comparing to the system exists in the Oromo country. As a factor, he mentions the missing willingness of few individuals to

keep the decision of the *Jarasa biyya*, which seems the new identity construction within the Oromo diaspora that may not favor the *Jarsumma* system. The informant also emphasizes on an inability to change into practice what the *Jaarsa biyya* decided creates the invisibility on the *Jaarsummaa* system as well.

In general, various factors related to culture and the living environment push the people not to place confidence on the system. For example, the respondent mentions that as it is not only the people who become refugees, but the Oromo traditional social systems as well, by saying, "surprisingly, it is not only the people who become a refugee, the traditions as well." Thus, the weakness of the system also comes due to the social system itself is in a refugee status.

The informant 'A'

> *"We the Oromo have very wide and deep-rooted traditional and cultural practices. Due to its wideness, it has also some varieties on handling systems from place to place or region to region. For example, in my birth place Arsi, the communities have the organized and well-structured assembly. This assembly has objectives and goals. We call it ARSOOMA. Arsooma has a far prospect vision and wide objectives. The Arsooma assembly not only gathers at a time of conflict; rather at any time to look after every problem of the community in the community at any ordinary times; and to get ready at pre-hand and to find solutions for the problems at infant ages. The assembly has a responsibility to see the community's problems, how the community's live and the day to day activities of the societies to tackle the problems timely. This was how we experience social matters traditionally. This communal principle is in my mind. I have due value and respect for that. I am happy if it works here as well. Unfortunately, so far, I only see a try; not a practical resemblance to the original one. It is my desire if the Oromo in exile also implement the Original conflict management system to their day to day life though it may be a bit difficult to handle with the environment we are living."*

The informant above has brought the old memory he had to his current living situation. He precisely expresses the situation of the Oromo *Jaarsumma* in exile by indicating his strong inclination to the traditional Oromo conflict arbitrating mechanisms. He expresses different ways of traditional practices in the Oromo country that varies from region to region; and as of the traditional practices also appears in various ways for different reasons. Thus, to cope with all situations, elders give serious follow up on each

case that happen in the community for the sake of peace building and development within the community even apart from the conflict time. His actual concern is on his typical birth place *Arsi* area where he accumulated ample experiences of traditional matters.

In Arsi Oromo area, the *ARSOOMAA* assembly works for peace and development within the *Arsi* Oromo community. Moreover, *Arsooma* assembly runs to tackle the problems of the community at an early age before it gets higher. On the other hand, he states how frustrated he is with the current Oromo conflict management system in the exile due to the negligence that most community members are showing on traditional issues. The communities in exile are not exceptionally close to the tradition, but are neither far away from it. Of course, they use a similar form of traditional conflict arbitrating system. However, it is not strong and has no exact resemblance with the original Oromo systems as it does in the Oromo country. He also points out the impact of the living environment as one of the main factors that forge the system and to become acutely weak in exile.

The informant 'b' also indicates his views in the following ways:

> *"You know (pause)....the orthodoxy nature and the strong respect that the community had for the jaarsummaa institution is swiftly declining here. The communities are also becoming more of individualistic. Even if there are interests to solve problems through the traditional ways, the accountability to keep the decision of the jaarsa biyyaa is very minimal compared to the system in the Oromo country. Some even say everyone lives his/her own life; no one needs anyone assistance. They say "Whatever he/she says, I do not bother...." (Pause).....of course, there are many more things that people may say. After all, individualistic life principle is making the communities not to give due values for the Jaarsumma. Nevertheless, most of us always try to keep the system within us. We do all our bests to sustain the system. Especially we who are very friendly always try to keep our tradition. Thus, so far, we have solved a few community problems through jaarsummaa following the customs and norms of the community. Apart from our community here in Norway, some of us have also been participated on the jaarsumma in the neighboring country in Sweden. Indeed, there are also a number of cases that go beyond the capability of the elders and are finally taken to the courts"*

The above informant indicates that how most of his worries lie on the declining of the Oromo traditional conflict management system in exile. Similar to the other respondents, the informant also points out some of the factors by inferring into less communal ways of living as a pro factor for the system to decline swiftly. Apart from this, the loss of the orthodoxies nature among the communities is the factor for the system to unusually get weak.

On the other hand, there are also some strong parts of the Oromo community, especially those who are striving to maintain their Oromoness through traditional conflict management by preserving the system within the Oromo community though preference is still limited to only more of the friendly people in exile. Apart from Norway, through the community initiation, a few problems have also been solved by *Jaarsummaa* in the neighboring country of the Oromo community in Sweden although the system unable to address many cases as it demands.

5.3.4   The Gender roles in the Oromo traditional conflict management in exile

Most of the informants have accumulated long time experiences in the traditional conflict management, and a few of them have gained ample experiences after they have started involving in it the diaspora. Therefore, they are able to talk about the gender role in the Oromo communities in exile, and I discuss the informants' narratives as follows.

Do the Oromo women participate in traditional conflict management here in Norway?

The informant A's narration:

> *"This is a difficult case. What I mean is… emmm…. it is a bit difficult to say women are practically involved in the Jaarsummaa process as the men are. However, they solve problems within the women groups. Of course, we have heard this so many times. I am sure they do. ……. We have beautiful culture. Our women like communal values which have the norms and customs of the Oromo culture. They like supporting each other. Always they prefer to be on the same bench for happiness and sadness. They have come together by bringing the cultural and traditional values to support each other like they do in the Oromo country. …..the values they have built here are based on assisting each other. However, they did not have yet involved in the traditional Jaarsummaa process with men. So far I did not see any. If you ask me why not,*

even if I tell you it may not sound truth (little smile). If someone says I was wrong here it sounds good; but it rarely happens. You know what I mean? …. emmm…. our women are skilled women. They know how they live together respecting their cultural norms and values. Although they did not have yet participated in the Jaarsummaa congregation with men, they may have share the ongoing situation from their husbands. For instance, I discuss with my wife on any social matters including the conflict issue I participated in. We live together. I usually seek her suggestions, even on how to arbitrate conflicts in the communities. I discuss with her. She also sees points through me. Do you catch my point? You know, here there is no way to say woman do not know anything and she belongs only to the house chores activities, the same is true in the Oromo country as well. Women participations have seen in various effects. In the Oromo culture, women are the most respected and sacred human creatures; they are a symbol for peace. Here in the country we are living, our women bring wonderful and reasonable ideas on the stages on community meeting; we respect their ideas. However, yet I did not see them participating in traditional social system of reconciliation with men in the Jaarsummaa. Their participation is exactly the same as to the Oromo country in most traditional matters. You know why? It is just tradition. Any ways, we may see what comes and we will try to include them in the future (smile).

As the informant indicates that the involvement of the Oromo women in traditional conflict management with men is still none even in exile. The effort is limited only within their surroundings – just with women's affairs. They have gathered more for communal values as similar to the way they had done in the Oromo country. They share their happiness and sadness within their group. They discuss on their common problems. It seems they are reflecting the Oromo women *Siinqee* identities by sticking only within their social ties in exile as well. They have strong connections with each other; as they do in the *siinqee* institution in the Oromo country. They are alienated from the *jaarsummaa* system in the western cultural framework as well. Of course, if one asks why, the respondent indirectly explains as the traditional matters are the only closed responses. In fact, they are not totally ignorant about the ongoing situation in their surroundings. They would gain information through the active participation of their husbands.

Informant B,

"Of course we have learnt a number of experiences from this country. We are learning and we may have learned more. In this country, women are on the top positions and they have actively involved in a number of big decision makings. However, when we see things through our culture, though there are some

interests among a few people including me to make our women part of the decision makers in traditional system *Jaarsummaa*, so far we have not allowed them; and we have not seen any woman in the *jaarsummaa* process as well. In my stay here for more than twelve years, in Norway, I have never seen any Oromo woman participating in the *Jaarsumma* process with men. I think there are some shortcomings on this regard. I guess we all favor equality in principles; but we did not see practically in traditional areas on Oromo women case yet, even in the western context".

The informant indicates that there are interests among a few individuals including him to include the Oromo women in traditional decision making procedures with men. However, yet a single woman has not participated in the traditional system- *Jaarsumaa*. He justifies making women part of the *Jaarsummaa* as an important condition for better and reasonable decision makings in the entire society. Of course, he also considers not including them into the group as a failure. To validate his idea he gives a typical example of the Norwegian women's roles on decision making, which benefit both men and women equally. Thus, he wishes that if the Oromo communities have learnt from Norwegian communities and includes women in traditional decision making as well.

Informant C,

> *"Still there are plenty of short comings in this area. The women do not participate on traditional conflict management even here in a western country. "Dhalaan Konfileensa Konfeleesni Dubbii hin muru wanti jedhamu asittis inuma jirti." which means women are not appreciated to solve conflicts by being part of the jaarsa biyya."*

In all, women have not had that strong role in conflict management in the Oromo traditional social system. The social system continues by a similar trend even in the Western environment as well. Their role in the traditional conflict management is still insignificant. They have only been involved in some other committees of the community that focuses on Western systems. It seems the traditional beliefs of the male dominance that regard women as incompetent in traditional social matters is reflecting within the western environmental setting too.

CHAPTER SIX

6.   DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this chapter I discuss the findings of the study on the following schemes namely: the diaspora, identity, multiculturalism and conflict management system by focusing on how someone becomes diaspora, the identity construction and the Oromo conflict management systems within the Oromo communities in the multicultural setting.

6.1   Becoming a diaspora

The fundamental case that forces the Oromos to leave their country is similar to one of the cases studied in the theoretical part. The government role takes the lion share on the Oromo cases in particular. As all of the informants indicate, they were forced to leave their Oromo country unwillingly due to the audacious pressure from the Ethiopian government. The government was fissuring, torturing and oppressing them limitlessly. The human rights watch reveal cases of the Oromos that are tortured and intimidated by the government in Ethiopia almost every year[27]. Torture is not only limited to physical assault; it could also be expressed in diverse ways. It is the killing of the mind's sprit and making it insecure. Intimidation is one of the worst torturing techniques. It is very a dehumanizing action that damages the human mind. It is a psychological war that made a person very weak, suspicious and obliges to forfeit trust in anyone.

6.2   Identity construction in the multicultural setting

In relation to the multicultural issues, the entire discussions indicate that the Oromo diaspora in Norway are in favor of multiculturalism. All of the respondents expressed that they are in favor of the multicultural setting in which they are living. They have also documented their compliments to some regions in Norway, especially to the regions that provide access to their children to learn their language although some of them are also very emotional for the fact that they do not have community schools in some areas; which they may think that hinders the opportunity of teaching their language to their children.

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[27] The online accessible human right watches reports about Oromo
http://www.hrw.org/search/apachesolr_search/oromo

On the matter of identity construction, all informants construct their identities based on certain claims. For example, they identify their ethnic identity as a natural right and that no one has a right to change it. Moreover, to prove their claims on this regard, they have counted back to the seventh family trees of their blood origins. All of them expressed their *Oromoness* through birth from their Oromo ethnicity background. They were born Oromo and no one can change that; they claimed that they themselves have no right to change it. They also expressed their civic attachment and political national identities to the country they are living in which tells of their new Citizenships identities. In addition to these, the respondents have also constructed their identities based on race, color, environment, profession and gender.

In fact identity is not a simple concept. It is a word that is presented in many discourses both in popular and scientific areas. Many scholars agreed up on various discourses of the identity understanding by referring into the political, social, self, and ethnic concepts. It has also fostered a large number of compound concepts like objective self-awareness, identity salience (Ashmore, et. al, 1997: 20). Therefore, the widely accepted conceptual frame of identity guides that it is impossible to define identity based on a single variable. It is defined in a number of ways that an individual construct for him/herself. For instance, at the individual level, the self-identity can be labeled under the subject (agent or process) and object (content or structure) (Ashmore, et. al, 1997). Thus, labeling oneself to a single identity is just a thought that would not work in reality. I completely agree with Ashmore since all typical ways of identity expressions are totally observed among the Oromos in the diaspora in Norway as well.

The fluid nature of an identity that is discussed in theoretical part is also practically observed among the Oromos in the diaspora. Recently, almost all of them hold multiple identities. They have developed new identities of the host country, which were not part of their lives. Apart from this, they have also forfeited some of their former practical personal identities which could express them in person. Nevertheless, it is also learned that all of the informants have very strong perception on their ethnic identity views. Above all, they argue that as they are striving strongly to maintain their ethnic Oromo identity differently. Even in some points the results of the study portrays that the ethnic

Oromo identity and Oromo political identity gets stronger in exile. It seems the freedom of expression that they have gained in the western countries attribute them more to be engaged in more of the Oromo political identities compared to the freedom of expression that they have lost in their home country due to the brutality of the Ethiopian regime on the Oromos.

In the multicultural society people have multiple allegiances that have different combinations in the single area. Thus, racial, ethnic, and immigrant groups have construct their identities partly through distinct ways of speaking the language of the host country's nation. The accents they have produced may even classify them to a typical immigrant identity. Consequently, some of them also strive to maintain their own languages. They try all their bests to provide opportunities to teach the language to their children. Moreover, they may also make their languages more of their communication media when both families have the same ethnic backgrounds and speak the same language, to set their identity to ethnic identity as to the same as the informants in the study claims.

Of course, as most people perceived, language and identity has no natural connections. However, for some it has a direct relation. Indeed, it is learned from the analyzed data that language is a means to preserve self-ethnic identity, especially when the identity is under pressure. Most importantly the connection may seriously matters when questions like "Who am I? Who are we? Where do I belong? And where are we belonging to?" constantly comes to the mind and is left unanswered, similar to the case of the respondents in the study who state the Oromo political cases in relation to the question of Oromo Nationalism *Oromumma (*Oromoness*).* In their argument, most of them stated that the people and language have been suppressed by tyrants for so long. Thus, from their view it reveals that the language would be the other options to preserve an identity and to provide answers to the unanswered questions. Indeed, from the study it is learned that there is a strong connection between identity and the language among the Oromos of the study group.

In general, it is seen that the diasporic environment is a full-fledged set of various cultures. Thus, the new arrivals pass through different challenges to integrate themselves with the societies and to make the host country's cultures part of their life. Additionally, in the multicultural environment making new experiences is the fact for anyone who lives in cultural settings outside of his/her own. In fact, it is not easy to bring all the unique cultural settings that someone is familiar with to where he/she lives. Thus, knowingly or unknowingly he/she adapts to the existing cultural atmosphere-which could be the case either to develop the new identities or to forfeit the earlier personal identities. Therefore, at some point, even the definition of the cultural contexts could appear in a different milieu from the former one. The newly developed identity may influence the former identity or vice versa.

It is also observed that the families of the study group are trying to make their children in the domain of the Oromo original cultural context although they are living in the environmental setting that is different from their ancestral home. Indeed, bringing the original cultural domain to the Western cultural framework is a challenging and that could not sensibly work for the children born outside the original context of the Oromo cultural framework who especially claim multi cultures. The practical case observed on most of the informants themselves is a proof that indicates a slight shift of identities from the earlier, not even imposing the Oromo cultural practices on children who are grown up outside the Oromo cultural frameworks.

It is thought that a multicultural setting creates better ways for building peace and unity in the country with love and respect. Of course, it is not a means to create a harmony without any conflict. For instance, the respondent in the study who was annoyed by the fact that people were eating in the classrooms explores some sort of reasonable information on the multicultural settings. It shows it is neither easy to buy love and respect without conflict in an area where multiculturalism is favored as well. It is fact that there are conflicts in the multicultural frameworks as well. However, there are also ways to create a suitable environment where the communities live together by building tolerances to one another and by sharing the good experiences. Indeed, tolerance is a key factor for building unity and love in the communities. Apart from this, the study group also indicates that all of them are not pro for assimilation.

6.3   Do Oromo traditional conflict arbitrating systems work in exile?

Maintaining self-identity is maintaining the traditional practices of the communities. Similarly developing new identities is also forfeiting some of the unique identities that someone or the communities had. The new environment is always a bench mark for various changes. Thus, either knowingly or unknowingly the changes create new types of life-styles. On the other hand, sometimes the modern era will also cover up the earlier living habits and changes the generations through tangible effects that are completely different from the one that exists within the societies.

Sometimes how people perceive modernity is a confusing concept. Of course, modernization is not Westernization or some other cult. It is a way of advancing self within what anyone has either scientifically or through other means that appears in the generation. Anyone or any society can modernize itself based on its own traditions. It is fact that there are some bad and good traditional practices in any community. However, the important thing is thinking on how to maintain the important and avoid the bad one. Likewise, it is seen that the Oromos in exile, like any other diaspora community are trying to keep some of the good traditional practices while they also avoid the bad one. For instance, the traditional *Jaarsummaa* system is one of the traditional practices that yet kept in the minds of the diaspora at least; though it is not very much strong.

In the *Jaarsummaa,* any member of the *Jaarsa* team agenda is to provoke peace. Almost all people grown up in this structure mostly praise the system and likely wish to delicately work to it wherever. Of course, what is observed in the analyzed data in the earlier chapter on the Oromo disapora is one of the points that show the efforts that some Oromos in the community are still doing to maintain the *Jaarsummaa* system. In point of fact, even though some differences have been observed in the applicability when compared to the *Jaarsummaa* system in the Oromo land, in exile, it seems only the processes are maintained; like the opening procedures. In fact, this portrays the similarity of the *Jaarsummaa* system by the structure and by other procedures although the validity of the decision made by the *Jaarsa biyya* is still in question among most diaspora. The attitudes that some individuals have toward *Jaarsumma* in exile is different from the attitudes that it has in the Oromo country, it lacks validity.

The opening ways of *Jaarsummaa* is exactly the same as in the Oromo country which indicates that rituals remain although the environment is different. For instance, the following conversation between the two *Jaarsas* portrays the fact. (J1 *Dhugee yaa'ee nagayaan siif haa galau (May your cattle peacefully drink and back to your yard) J2. Anaaf sittuu(the same to you as well).* However, not all ritual practices are observed while the communities in exile arbitrate conflicts traditionally. Indeed, the Oromos in exile have no cattle, but, still they maintain the procedure the same as to the Oromo land. This simply defines how the love for traditions is retained among the community members in exile.

There are unlimited numbers of facts that may cause difficulties in exercising the traditions in similar ways as in back home. Most informants indicated that it is not possible to say confidently that the Oromo traditional conflict management is working actively in the diaspora. They have also indicated that it is neither possible to say it is totally vanished. Because, the community is still using the system occasionally even in the different environment though the creditability it has is not the same as the creditability it has in the Oromo country. As it is observed from the analyzed data, there is quite high negligence among the communities to respect the *Jaarsa* decisions. The informants point fingers to some individuals who are very negligent, and who passes over what the *Jarsa biyyaa* decided as a prominent factor at least for the weaknesses of the *Jaarsummaa* social system in exile.

Furthermore, they stated the living situation of the Western countries- individualism, as a factor which considers oneself as a self-sufficient and not seek assistances from others. In fact, the respondents presuppose the collective ways of living as a pillar for the strong appearances of the *Jaarsummaa* system in the Oromo country. Seemingly, the respondents put the weakness of the system on the absence of this communal way of living in exile as well. The question is: Does the absence of collective ways of living really affect *Jaarsumma?* My answer is yes. As the informants indicated the social tie within the Oromo system is very strong, which basically goes with the communal ways of living. As one of the respondents' states, "[….] families live in collective ways of life; they borrow many things from each other's including the spices for foods. Thus, communities love to live communal; and they need to sustain the system forever." In

such community, where ways of living depend on one another, the system affects the entire communities. It seems it is one of the reasons that the Oromos in their country have struggled to maintain the communal ways of living for various social benefits. The communal life has great social ties which encourages various traditional practices like the *Jaarsumaa* system as well. Indeed, in back home, losing such a social tie affects every individual in many ways. Conversely, in the diaspora of the Western countries, that is not the case.

In general, the traditional Oromo conflict arbitrating system that is assessed in the exile seems to work for it is occasionally used among the people who are in the same social stratum though the reality is very opposite- passive. Why does it seem to be working but it is very passive? The followings are the points.

1. Due to colossal love and respects for the traditions are still within the minds of the community members and everyone demands and wishes to exercise the system though it is not seen as a strongly practical implementation in exile. Apart from this, every respondent replied that as all of them are very happy if they solve any of their community problems according to the norms, customs and values of the Oromo traditions, which apparently indicates the love to the tradition among the Oromos in exile. In general, it seems only the love for the tradition forces them to talk about *Jarsummaa* though they are not actively practicing it.

2. Due to a very few social problems of the community have been solved by *Jaarsummaa* in Norway and in the nearby Oromo community members in the neighboring country, by few individuals who are very friendly to each other. Thus, it seems the system is working, however, yet it is not active. For instance, a number of cases are failed to solve by the *Jaarsummaa* and goes to the court as the respondents stated. The situation proved the weakness of the system in exile.

3. The less communal values and higher individualism in the Western countries lead the system to deteriorate swiftly in exile compared to the Oromo country.

4. The tradition itself is in a refugee status with the people, and it has very limited right to pass decisions, which led the institution itself to lacks respects in exile as well. Therefore, the laws of the host country are more acceptable and favored by

some Oromo community members as well than the traditional system for various social matters in Norway.

5. Finally, a few people are not also willing to fully accept the decisions passed by the *Jaarsa biyyaa*, and are not up to it to respect the penalties approved by the institution. Therefore, the weak sides of the *Jaarsummaa* system take the highest percent than its strong part in exile.

On the other hand it is also observed that the role of the Oromo women in traditional conflict management in exile has the same status as it has in the Oromo country. They are still marginalized even in a cultural environment where the women have strong role equal to men in political role, social and economic decision matters. Apart from this, the ritual activities are not also active in the diaspora though the conflict arbitrating by *Jaarsummaa* demands more of ritual activities by nature.

6.4 Limitation of the study

This study has several limitations. These are pertaining to the methodology, the sampling and to the financial problems. The study uses a single case study only on the Oromo diaspora in Norway. Thus it has shortages to portray the entire Oromo diaspora situations on identity construction and indigenous conflict management as well. On the other hand, the sampling also did not include all of the Oromo tribes. Indeed, it has some tribes though it is hard to generalize the entire Oromo diaspora situations. Of course, financial problem was also one of the factors that would not allow the researcher to include all the Oromo tribes in the study. Language was not a problem on conducting the research, because, I am an Oromo and the Oromo language is my mother tongue.

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Appendices

Appendix 1.   Gaafiifi Deebii Afaan Oromootiin

1. Maqaa keessan, akkamiin akka biyya kana dhuftaniif maaliif akka dhuftan naaf himaa
2. Waggaa meeqaaf biyya kana keessa jiraatan?
3. Wanti yeeroo jalqabaatiif isinitti adda ta'ee kan aadaa koo keessa hinjiru jetanii yaadan maal ture?
4. Maatii horatanii jirtuu? Yoo maatii horataniif cidhaan moo akkam? Yoo cidha ta'e ciin keessan akkamiin ture? Aadaa Oromootiin, karaa Amaantaadhaan moo karaa Aadaa biyya keessa jiraatuun?
5. Ijjoollee qabduu? Yoo qabaataniif ijoolleen teessan Afaan Oromoo dubbatuu?
6. Yoo kan dubbatan ta'e akkamiin Afaan Oromoo baratan? Yoo Afaan kan hinbeenne ta'eef isin carraan isaan Afaan oromoo barsiisuuf gootan hagam? Tattaafiin keessanis maal fakkaata?
7. Qophiiwwan adda addaa kan aadaan biraa keessatti ta'uu keessatti hirmaannaan keessan maal fakkaat?
8. Haasaya keessan keessatti waanti haasaya keessan uguru(Communication barrier) jirti hawaasa naannoo kee jiru waliin? Yoo jiraatee mee waan akkamii fa'aa?
9. Aadaafi duudhaa keettin ala ta'ee wanti jiruufi jireenna kee guyyuu keessatti dhiibaa fidan takkaahuu mudhiusan wayi jiran? Yoo jiratan mee maal fa'a?
10. Maxaquun aadaafi duudhaa biyya keessa jiratanii keessatti miidhaa qaba moo miidhaa hin qabu jettu? Yoo hin qabaannes akkamiin? Yoo qabaates akkamiin mee naaf ibsaa.
11. Aadaafi duudhaan siif maal? Mee naaf ibsaa.
12. Eennumaa jechuun isiniif maal mee naaf ibsaa.
13. Mee eennumaa teessan akka yaada walii galaatti naaf ibsuu dandeettuu? Takkaahuu akka Oroomootii ykn akkuma biraatiinuu?
14. Mee jechoota gababaan eenummaan akka nama tookootti isiniif maal akka taate naafi ibsaa. FKn akkaataa Kornyaatiin, hujiitiin, fedhii keessaniitiin..kkf
15. Hiikaa maqaa maatii keessanii beetuu? Yoo beetaniif hiikaan warra maatii keessanii waan seenaa wahiitiin walqabate qaba moo hin qabu mee naaf ibsaa akka lamaaniinuu.
16. Amala kee keessatti wantii akka maatii ati irraa dhuftee fakkaata jettu jirtii? Yoo jiraatteef mee akkamiin fakkaatti?
17. Waldhabbiin uumama nama ta'ee kan jiruuf jireenna keessatti uumamuudha. Isin umrii keessan keessatti namaan waldhabdanii beettanii? Eeyyee ykn wa'a.
18. Yoo deebiin keessan eeyyen ta'e, hawaasa oromoo waliin moo warroota biraa kan naanoo keessan jiraatan. Waldhabbii keessanii wantoonni sababa ta'an maal fa'a turan?
19. Waldhabbii yoo jiraatteef waldhaba keessan akkamiin furtan? Karaa aadaatiin moo karaa seera biyyattii keessa jirtaniin?
20. Yoo kan karaa aadaatiin ture mee adeemsa isaa naaf ibsaa. Eenutu araara keessaniif hirmaate? Isin mataa keessanii nama araarsuu irratti hirmaattanii beettanii?
21. Mee gadi fageenyaan akkaataa araaraa aadaa Oromoo kan jaarsummaa naaf himaa.
22. Isin karaa kamiin osoo waldhabbii keessan irra caalaa hiikatanii filatan biyya tana keessatti? Karaa Aadaatiin moo karaa seera biyya keessa jirtaniin?

23. Isin mataa keessaniin araara manguddoo keessatti hirmaatanii beetanii? Yoo hirmaataniif, yoom? Akkamiin? Eessatti? Gaheen keessani hoo maal ture?

24. Hirmaannaan kornayaa dubbii hawaasa furuu keessatti keessumaanuu jaarsummaa ta'anii araara buusuu keessatti maal fakkaata?

25. Yaanni aadaafi duudhaa akkasumatti eennumaa gubbatti najalaa hafe jetanii itti dabaluu feetan jira? Akkasumas wanti ani asi keessatti hinedaaneef akka naming biraa beekuu qaba jettee barbaaduu jiraa? Yoo jiraateef mee naaf ibsa?

Appendix 2.   Interview questions (Semi-structured)

1.   Can you tell me about yourself? Your name, what have you been doing before coming to Norway and how you leave your country?

2.   For how long have you been lived in Norway?

3.   What was the very strange part to you on your very first arrival to Norway?

4.   Are you married? Yes or no   If yes, when? Where? To whom? How did you make the ceremony? In Oromo Cultural way? Religious way? Or by the host country's culture?

5.   Do you have kid/s? If yes, does/do your kid/s speak Afan Oromo?

6.   If yes how do they learn the Oromo language? If not what do you think about teaching them the Oromo Language?

7.   Do you participate in any cultural events of the country you are living in?

8.   Do you feel there are any communications barriers between yourself and those not of your culture? If yes can you tell them some?

9.   Do you feel that there are assumptions regarding cultural "norms" that impact your day-to-day behavior and do you recognize any challenges or disadvantages of being outside the "norm?

10.   Do you feel there are any privileges or advantages to assimilating to the "normative" culture?

11.   What does tradition mean to you?

12.   What does identity mean to you?

13.   Can you explain yourself in short that could sum up your identity? Whether Oromo or whatsoever?

14.   Can you tell me in few words that sum up your identity as a person? For instance gender, personality, work, family, interest,,, etc

15.   Do you know the meaning of your family name? Are there stories about the origins of your family name?

16.   Do you feel you're like any of your grandparents? In what ways?

17.   Conflict is very natural and it could exist at any time. Thus, have you ever been encountered in conflict? Yes or No?.

18.   If yes, within your community (with your community members) or with the other community including the country's citizens? What are the sources of conflicts?

19.   If your answer is yes so how did you manage the conflict? In cultural ways or in the European system? Especially conflicts based on personal interests.

20. If it was the traditional way, can you tell me how the process goes on? Who take responsibilities to solve the problems? And have you ever been participated on conflict management in your community in traditional way? If yes what is/was your responsibility?
21. Can you explain the detail process of traditional conflict management? (traditional strategies of conflict resolution is discussed in detail)
22. Which way do you prefer to solve conflicts in your community? The traditional way or the European way? Why? Can you explain it?
23. Have you ever been involved in conflict management process in your community? If yes, when and how and what was your responsibility in the team?
24. How the gender role is in your community conflict management? Can you explain it? So, do you include both genders to solve the communities' problem in traditional ways?
25. Do you have any comments you would like to make on cultural identity and you would like others to know that I have not included here about you or your culture?

Appendix 3. The Oromo Community in Oslo – the website

Appendix 4: Interviewees' information data

code	gender	Nationality of Origin	Current Citizenship	Country of Residence	Stay lengths in year	Family situations	Current employment	Reasons for immigrating
A	M	Ethiopia	Norwegian	Norway	More than 22yrs	married	employed	political
B	M	Ethiopia	Norwegian	Norway	12	married	employed	political
C	M	Ethiopia	Norwegian	Norway	12	complicated	employed	political
a	F	Ethiopia	Norwegian	Norway	12	married	employed	political
b	M	Ethiopia	Norwegian	Norway	10	married	employed	political
c	M	Ethiopia	Norwegian	Norway	12	Divorced	unemployed	political